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PM calls for panel to monitor Palestinian incitement to violence

By JAY BUSHINSKY

WASHINGTON — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called yesterday for the creation of a tripartite committee to monitor Palestinian "incitement to violence."

The suggestion came as he and his aides sought a bridging formula that might eventually enable the IDF to withdraw from more than nine percent of the West Bank without immediately complying with the US recommendation that 13.1% be given up.

"The committee could include legislators from all three sides," Netanyahu said in a speech to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, indicating that it could consist of Israelis, Americans, and Palestinians.

Netanyahu's presentation of his ideas to the institute, and in a series of meetings on Capitol Hill, preceded his second round of talks with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, which started late last night.

Netanyahu confirmed yesterday that the depth of the IDF's third redeployment in the West Bank has been the overriding issue in his talks with Albright and the concurrent deliberations of the Israeli and American experts.

"We have to know how much more land will have to be given up in a third redeployment," Netanyahu said in his speech. "The issue is not how many slices [of land there will be], but the total amount."

Implicit in his remarks was the notion that there must be a finite

end to the process of withdrawal in the West Bank and that the more territory to be relinquished in the third pullback, the less will be handed over in the pending second one.

This was also his approach in a series of meetings with legislators on Capitol Hill yesterday.

Netanyahu's first session there was with the powerful Senate House Committee on Foreign Policy, where he was warmly greeted by House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. At his side on the dais was Likud MK Meir Sheetrit.

The address to the Washington Institute was studded with skillfully-composed metaphors and frequent rhetorical flourishes, all meant to convince his audience that security is the foremost consideration in working out a viable peace agreement.

He contended that the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan "are based on [the realization of the Arab side] that there is no credible war option."

Arguing that there is "a vital link between peace and security," Netanyahu said "a peace that is not secure will not endure."

He rejected the notion that normal relations with the neighboring states could be construed as compensation for risks that might be taken for the sake of an agreement.

"A cold peace is infinitely preferable to a hot war," he said. "Normalization is a bonus, but it is not the foundation of peace."

See PM, Page 12

Nakba demonstrations most violent since 1996

10 Gazans die, 400 wounded

By STEVE RODAN, MARGOT DUDKEVITCH, and MOHAMMED NABE

As many as 10 Gaza residents were killed and some 400 Palestinians wounded, eight seriously, as thousands of demonstrators, many of them throwing stones and firebombs, rampaged through IDF roadblocks around the Gaza Strip yesterday.

It was the most violent outbreak since the September 1996 clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinian Police.

That 10 were killed was reported last night by the Palestinian Authority's Health Ministry director-general, Dr. Imad Tarawiyah, but estimates varied.

The demonstrators ignored appeals by the Palestinian Authority and attacked IDF soldiers in Gaza and in the West Bank, in a violent commemoration of the 50th anniversary of al-Nakba ("the catastrophe"), the Palestinian term for the founding of the State of Israel.

PA Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo blamed the "massacre" on the Israeli government, saying troops shot wildly at peaceful Palestinian demonstrators.

But Palestinian and Israeli eyewitnesses asserted that the clashes began when Palestinians left the planned route of the march and attacked IDF positions.

OC Judea and Samaria Brigadier-General Yitzhak Eitan stressed that no live ammunition was fired by security forces in the West Bank.

In Gaza, troops fired live ammunition only when their lives were in danger, the IDF Spokesman stressed. Otherwise they used rubber and plastic bullets and tear gas to disperse the rioters.



Palestinians remove the body of Samir Fayad after he was shot dead by IDF soldiers during rioting at the Gush Katif junction yesterday. (Reuters)

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai met with Chief of

General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak. General Security Service head Ami Ayalon, and IDF commanders to assess the situation.

He called on IDF officers to maintain contact with Palestinian security and intelligence officials and deploy more troops where neces-

sary, stressing that the policy is to restore calm to the area.

See TEN DIE, Page 2

Yitzhak Moda'i dies, 72

Jerusalem Post Staff and Itim

Yitzhak Moda'i, who during the course of a Knesset career that spanned more than 20 years served in several ministerial posts, died in Haifa's Rambam Hospital yesterday evening. He was 72.

"The State of Israel has lost an excellent, multi-talented, original, and wise man, who will be missed by all of us," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, in a statement released by his bureau.

Moda'i was born in Tel Aviv and received a degree in chemical engineering from the Technion. He also earned degrees in law and economics from the Hebrew University and the University of London.

Moda'i began his political career as a member of the now-defunct Liberal Party, which merged into the Likud. He served as minister without portfolio, finance minister, justice minister



Yitzhak Moda'i

and energy and infrastructure minister. He is best known for the 1985 economic stabilization plan that severely curtailed the hyperinflation of the early 1980s, which he, as finance minister, devised together with then-prime minister Shimon Peres.

His last public role was as head of the Jubilee Association, a post from which he resigned several months ago because of dissatisfaction with the way the government related to the committee.

He is survived by his wife Michal, a son, and a daughter.

Appreciation, Page 2

Russian envoy: My gov't has proved it's not helping Iran

By STEVE RODAN

Russian Ambassador Mikhail Bogdanov said yesterday his government has given Israel evidence that refutes accusations by Jerusalem and Washington that Russia allows the transfer of missile and nuclear weapons technology to Iran.

Bogdanov said Israel and Russia have established a dialogue on Iran but suggested that those who are pressing the issue actually intend to divert attention away from the stalled peace process.

He added that Israel might be acting on disinformation similar to the false intelligence relayed by Yehuda Gil, the longtime Mossad agent accused of mis-

leading superiors with assertions that Syria was preparing for an imminent war.

Bogdanov said the Russian-Israeli dialogue on Iran and other Middle East issues will continue with the visit of Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov's deputy, Viktor Posuvalyuk, who is touring the Middle East and will arrive here on Monday for talks with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The ambassador said Posuvalyuk will bring a message from Syria regarding the continuation of peace talks between Jerusalem and Syria. He said Damascus is interested in such a prospect.

"Mr. Posuvalyuk will bring a message to Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu from the

Russian leadership," Bogdanov said.

The ambassador said the evidence countering charges Russia was transferring nuclear technology to Iran was presented during a meeting Primakov had during his October visit here with Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and senior military and intelligence officials.

The ambassador, who attended all of Primakov's meetings, recalled that during the session with Mordechai, IDF intelligence chief Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon presented a list of companies he said were providing missile technology to Iran.

"Primakov presented his own list which answered Ya'alon's list in detail and proved that there is no official line to trans-

fer missile technology to Iran," Bogdanov said. "And our intelligence services work to stop any leaks. If there are criminals who leak such technology they will be arrested and we will publicize this."

"We aren't doing this because of pressure on us, but because these leaks are dangerous to our national security. I can find documents that were reported in the last few days from the FSB [Russian intelligence service] in which they say directly of the serious steps we are doing and the punishment of those who violate this."

Mordechai's spokesman Avi Benayahu did not have immediate comment on Bogdanov's account.

Bogdanov said the issue of

purported Russian aid to Iran's missile and nuclear weapons program has become so emotional that evidence has been distorted. He said Russia observes the commitments it signed in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

"We are not so crazy and stupid to create a nuclear threat on our southern border," he said. "This is Russian national security. The Americans live across the ocean from us and Israel is farther from Iran than we are."

Bogdanov suggested that Russia's ties with Iran are being unfairly singled out, while Washington ignored India's nuclear program until this week's series of atomic weapons tests.

Pakistan said planning nuclear test explosion

ISLAMABAD (Reuters) — Pakistan's cabinet met yesterday amid reports it had already decided to carry out its first

nuclear test in retaliation for five tests by arch-foe India earlier this week.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif chaired the second gathering of his senior ministers in 24 hours to discuss what he called a threat posed to his Muslim nation by India's nuclear blasts.

The New York Times and American television network ABC reported that Islamabad had already taken the decision to launch Pakistan openly into the nuclear weapons age by detonating a device at a remote desert testing site.

Citing intelligence agencies and satellite data, the Times and ABC said technicians were gathering at the test site and a trial was being readied.

See PAKISTAN, Page 16

Free gifts
have a price
for new
mothers

By JUDY SEGEL

Have a baby — and when you return home, happy but exhausted, you're likely to be bombarded with phone calls and junk mail from companies that have signed deals with your hospital or from agents who managed to obtain information about you illicitly.

The Jerusalem Post has learned that baby formula, soaps, furniture, detergent, life insurance policies, diapers, bottled water, and many other products are promoted to new mothers who accept a free gift in the hospital and fill out a form. At times the bombardment occurs even when no form was filled out.

This recent phenomenon now affects every obstetrics department in the country except for Bnei Brak's Ma'ayan Hayeshua Hospital, which bars the deals with companies to prevent promotion of immodest or non-kosher products.

See MOTHERS, Page 16

Jakarta mobs rampage

JAKARTA (Reuters) — Mobs rampaged unchecked yesterday in Jakarta's worst riots in over three decades, while Indonesian President Suharto said he would stand down rather than use force to bring the country back to order.

Banks, supermarkets, electronics stores and bakeries were broken into, looted and torched

across wide areas of the city. The Red Cross said it knew of five wounded people taken to the hospital, but there was no other word of casualties.

At least 18 people have been killed in the capital this week as protests against Suharto, who has ruled for 32 years, turned violent.

Full story, Page 6

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Beer Sheva	7:06 p.m.	8:04 p.m.
Eilat	7:03 p.m.	8:05 p.m.

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In Syria: 50,000 join 'Nakba' protests

DAMASCUS (Reuters) — More than 50,000 Palestinians marched through the streets of the Yarmouk refugee camp near Damascus yesterday as part of various activities in Syria to protest the establishment of Israel 50 years ago.

In the Syrian capital and all other cities, courts were closed in response to a call by Syria's Bar Association "to express rejection of the racial Zionist aggression against Palestine in 1948."

"Syrian lawyers denounce the continuation of the Israeli occupation of Arab lands in Palestine, south Lebanon, and the Golan and the establishment of Jewish settlements in the Arab lands," the Bar Association said in a statement.

In the Yarmouk camp, where all shops and schools were closed, demonstrators burned an

imitation coffin representing the Palestinian-Israeli peace agreements and shouted slogans denouncing Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

The demonstration was organized by Palestinian factions opposing the Oslo Accords.

The demonstrators, who were joined by schoolchildren and many residents in the camp, burned several Israeli flags. They also carried banners calling for military action against Israel to achieve Israeli withdrawal from the occupied lands and establish an independent Palestinian state.

At the end of the demonstration, Esam Kadi, head of the Saka group, delivered a speech in which he said the Palestinians would "return to Palestine sooner or later."

In Jordan, UN workers helping over a million

Palestinian refugees stopped work for an hour yesterday to mark 50 years of Palestinian exile. The workers, mostly Palestinians themselves, held a sit-in at the UNRWA headquarters outside Amman.

"All we ask as refugees living outside our homeland is the implementation of ... UN Security Council resolutions which call for the right for our return," said UNRWA staff union head Hussein Yakoub.

Yakoub said the staff were marking "a homeland lost, a homeland ended by the Zionist project" which led to the creation of Israel in May 1948 and the dispossession of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

He said the UNRWA workers were expressing anger at a historic injustice and at the blocked Middle East peace process.



Palestinians fill downtown Ramallah during the speech of Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat as part of the march commemorating 'al-Nakba' yesterday.

Israeli Arabs plan marches today

By DAVID RUDGE

Some 15,000-20,000 Israeli Arabs are expected to take part in marches and a memorial at the site of a former Arab village near Nazareth this evening to mark al-Nakba (the catastrophe which befell the Palestinians in 1948).

Participants are slated to march from Shifaram and Nazareth to the site of Safat, which was evacuated during the fighting in the War of Independence.

The site is close to Moshav Tzori, some of whose residents expressed concern over the planned demonstration so close to

their homes.

"We are a very peaceful community and we enjoy excellent relations with the local Arab villages and their residents," said Mitch Piker, a resident of Tzori, which has a population of 500. "We don't understand why it was decided to precisely hold this rally here. We hope that this won't turn into an attempt to poison our good relations."

"We also asked if we could have a representative on the stage at the rally to give our point of view, but this was flatly refused," Piker added.

Nazareth police chief Dep. Cmdr. Alex Dan met recently with residents of Tzori. He stressed that the event itself was being organized by Arab council heads who had asked for and received permission from the police to stage the marches and rally.

Dan said it had been decided to guard all access points to the moshav so as to avoid even the slightest possibility of friction between residents and participants.

"There is no reason to believe that there will be any provocation or trouble, and the organizers themselves have promised everything will be done to ensure that

the event passes quietly. Nevertheless, we will have enough forces on duty as a precaution, as well as to help with controlling the traffic," he said.

The organizers said the rally would also stress the need for a just lasting peace and the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

The monitoring committee is also calling on members of the public to make visits on Saturday to Arab villages that were evacuated or abandoned in 1948 to underline the "rights of the evacuees to be allowed to return to their former homes."

State Department: Exercise restraint

By HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON — The State Department yesterday called on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to "exercise maximum restraint" so that calm can be restored in the West Bank and Gaza Strip following the death of ten Palestinians during clashes with the IDF.

The violence "underscores for all to see the need to break the impasse in the peace negotiations," said spokesman James Rubin.

He urged Israeli troops to seek to avoid lethal fire against Palestinian demonstrators. "Clearly to the maximum extent possible, we believe the use of lethal force against demonstrators must be avoided," he said.

"For the sake of Israelis and Palestinians alike, it is essential that the process get back [on track] and an agreement be reached. In this regard, it is critical that decisions required to do so be taken as quickly as possible. We urge both sides to exercise maximum restraint and do everything possible to defuse the situation and to restore calm," Rubin said.

Asked about Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's assertion that the Palestinians incited the violence, Rubin said the blame could not be laid solely at the Palestinian feet.

Earlier, Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs Martin Indyk told an American Jewish Committee luncheon that the breakdown in the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians has got to be repaired and it has got to be done quickly, because the consequences not just for Israel's relations with the Palestinians, but

the consequences for relations with all its Arab neighbors are dire.

Referring to the ongoing discussions over the extent of the redeployment, Indyk said that "it's not just a matter of a percent here or a percent there, as important as that is, it's also a matter of the quality of Israel's relations with its neighbors."

"Much has been achieved in that regard ... but much of that is now in jeopardy if we don't find a way to move forward," he added.

Indyk also criticized Israel for exaggerating Arafat's statements following his London meetings with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat last week.

The US "only reluctantly" assumed the role of mediator between the parties, which "was not a role we sought to have [but] we felt it necessary to step up our role."

"And we did so with the full understanding and encouragement of both parties. We did not impose ourselves on the parties. We were invited to play this role, Indyk said. "And we did so in full consultation with the government of Israel as to what our ideas were and how we were going to present it."

"So talk of ultimatums and ultimatums are totally inappropriate, given the way in which we have moved forward with the government of Israel in the peace process."

Indyk promised that the US will maintain its engagement in the talks, "but the time has come for decisions to be made by both sides. I am hopeful that by working intensively with the Government of Israel now we will find a way to make that happen."

Matza calls for unity gov't

By LIAT COLLINS

Health Minister Yehoshua Matza yesterday called for the formation of a national unity government following Nakba Day events.

Labor Party leaders, meanwhile, said the eruption of violence points up the need to address mounting despair in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over deadlocked peace talks.

Ranjan Cohen, the secretary-general of Labor, said that "there is a direct link between the ongoing stalemate in the political process

and the feeling of frustration and despair of the Palestinians."

"However," he added, "it cannot be allowed to deteriorate into violence which will bring about no solutions."

Deputy Prime Minister Moshe Katsav yesterday described the day's events as "a vile attempt at incitement and propaganda against Israel."

"One can show understanding and sensitivity towards the Palestinians' suffering but I am in no way going to accept responsibility for this suffering," he said.

MK Hanan Porat (National Religious Party) said the day's events "show in a nightmarish light what could happen to many settlements if the further redeployment goes ahead. The prime minister must stop the talks on the interim arrangements and start discussing immediately the permanent arrangements so we can see if the Arabs really want peace."

MK Benny Elon (Moledet) sent a fax to Netanyahu urging him to immediately return to Israel.

'Too brilliant for Israeli politics'

APPRECIATION

By SARAH BOIM

without fomenting a riotous political row.

His most notable achievement was engineering and overseeing the near-miraculous cure to the runaway inflation in 1985. He was a devoted minister of finance, a tireless worker, and a man who painstakingly saw his plans through. Moda'i was a doer.

Yet he was not a man who would keep silent over anything. When he sardonically lashed out against prime minister Shimon Peres, during the first national unity government, he lost his portfolio. But even his ignominious sacking did not stop Moda'i from continuing to speak out.

He was constantly in vocal, emotional opposition to someone or some issue. Thus he joined the oddest of bedfellows, Ariel Sharon and David Levy, in an ad hoc ministerial framework in which he imposed constraints on hawkish prime minister Yitzhak Shamir,

lest he, of all people, dare make any territorial concessions.

This did not keep Moda'i from shifting from superhawk to sometime relative dove. No one could know for sure why. In his Likud sister party of Herut, no one ever managed to quite read him. He was the most sharp-tongued and the most artful of the ragtag assortment that filled the Liberal Party with endless political antics and cliff-hangers.

Moda'i certainly overshadowed his lackluster fellow Liberals. His uncompromising nature was regarded as one of the causes for frequent internecine battles in that party and for its eventual demise. Yet he was also seen as restricted by his affiliation to a party with little ideology and no constituency. His unending political battles hastened his political end.

After announcing that he would pin down Shamir's promises to him via an undertaking to pay a hefty financial penalty if they were not fulfilled, he was pilloried by MK Ze'ev Begin, who warned him that the promises he won "were written on ice."

Moda'i was finished in the Likud and set up the Party for the Realization of the Zionist Idea, which died soon after its birth.

The scandals of his last days in the Likud are cited among the reasons the Shamir government was brought down in 1992. Shamir, nevertheless, paid warm tribute last night to "this excellent man."

He noted his talents in the economic and financial sphere and his work as finance minister. At the opposite end of the political spectrum, Meretz leader Yossi Sarid, often a target of Moda'i's acid-tongue, mourned him as "my friend" and remarked that "he was talented like few others; perhaps far too talented for Israeli politics."

CORRECTION

Likud MK Ze'ev Boim was mistakenly referred to as David Boim yesterday. David Boim was murdered in a terrorist shooting in May 1996. We apologize to David Boim's family for this error.

TEN DIE

Continued from Page 1

IDF sources said the clashes became so violent that Mordechai issued a personal appeal to Mahmoud Abbas, regarded as PA Chairman Yasser Arafat's chief aide, to use PA forces to stop the fighting.

Israeli military sources said the Palestinian Police had restored order by nightfall in most of the territories and termed their effort as genuine.

"Had we not acted with intelligence and patience, there would have been a lot more than eight dead," OC Southern Command Maj. Gen. Yom Tov Samia said.

Reacting to the clashes, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pinned the blame on the PA for stirring up hostility to Israel.

"It's easy to whip up a frenzy of bloodshed and violence," he said. Speaking at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Netanyahu said the Palestinians "must understand that agreements cannot be hostages to violence. It puts the Palestinian cause behind."

In a subsequent appearance on Capitol Hill, he again referred to the clashes, saying, "This is not the way. We cannot tolerate a situation in which violence erupts whenever there are points of difference" in the negotiating process.

Netanyahu made no reference to the fact that human life was lost. Despite PA assurances that the planned "march of the million" would be peaceful, the IDF had beefed up forces throughout the territories in anticipation of attacks. Palestinian sources said soon after the march began at 10 a.m., young demonstrators began to stream to the IDF checkpoints throughout the Gaza Strip.

Hundreds began to throw stones and firebombs and tried to climb the fences surrounding Jewish settlements. Troops responded with rubber and plastic bullets and tear gas. Palestinian policemen were overwhelmed by, in some cases, thousands of demonstrators, who swept past them toward the troops. At one point, a Palestinian grabbed a policeman's automatic weapon and began firing at an IDF position.

The most severe rioting was at the Erez roadblock where Palestinians mobbed a police position and headed for the IDF checkpoint less than a kilometer away. The troops lobbed tear gas, but soon resorted to live fire to disperse the crowd.

Palestinian sources said at least three people were killed and about 75 wounded in that clash. Palestinians were also killed in clashes with troops outside Gush Katif and at the Morag junction.

Palestinian sources identified five of the dead as Samir Fayad, Kamal Hassnet, Jihad Assi, Ghanim Wahidi, and Ashram Arram.

One of the dead was said to be a Palestinian policeman. In the West Bank, Palestinians attacked numerous IDF positions.

Heavy fighting was reported in Hebron, where 95 Palestinians were wounded by IDF gunfire. Eyewitnesses said hundreds threw stones and other objects at soldiers, who responded with plastic bullets, tear gas, and later, live ammunition.

In Bethlehem, 25 Palestinians were reported wounded near Rachel's Tomb, when hundreds of marchers left their route and attacked an IDF position. Soldiers responded with tear gas and rubber bullets.

In Jenin, five Palestinians were wounded.

In Ramallah, thousands of demonstrators headed toward an IDF checkpoint along the road to Jerusalem. Several of the demonstrators pulled out guns and began firing in the air. As soon as the demonstrators arrived at the checkpoint, the clashes began and Palestinian sources said 90 demonstrators were hurt.

In Ramallah's Manara Square, PA Chairman Yasser Arafat addressed the marchers in a live radio and television broadcast.

"We didn't fight for war, but for peace," he said. "We aren't asking for the moon. We are asking to fold the page of disaster forever and to build our independent state on our land. We are not a guest in the world. We are partners, and the partnership will not be realized if we haven't a homeland, like the others."

IDF officers charged that the Palestinians were purposely exaggerating the numbers of wounded. The IDF Spokesman said two Israelis were lightly wounded near Beituniya by stones thrown at their vehicle, one Israeli policeman was lightly wounded by a firebomb thrown on Shallah Street in Hebron, and four border policemen were lightly wounded by stones at the Beit Dajm junction near Nablous.

In the Gaza Strip, he said, an Israeli police officer was wounded at the Gush Katif junction by a stone, a border policeman at the Erez checkpoint was lightly wounded by a stone, and an IDF officer in the northern sector was lightly wounded by a stone.

OC Gaza Brig. Gen. Yoav Gallant said in some areas the Palestinian Police successfully prevented the crowds from reaching IDF troops, in other areas they were unsuccessful, and in some cases they did nothing at all.

He charged that while the Palestinian Police were responsible for restraining the rioters, it was clear that certain organizations worked behind the scenes to orchestrate yesterday's events.

"Those responsible for urging people into such a situation must have realized that someone would have to pay the price," he said, adding that IDF troops behaved in a restrained manner.

He disputed Palestinian charges that the large number of casualties were caused by the widespread use of live ammunition.

Jay Bushinsky contributed to this report.

Winning numbers

In yesterday's weekly Payis Hazak drawing, ticket number 325711 won NIS 1.5 million, while ticket number 129096 won the car.

Tickets 456447, 191788, 314706, 050175, 771290, 840212, 686674 and 11625 won NIS 5,000. Tickets ending in 72370, 31270, 79243, 49844, 00266, 67175, 22945, 35894, 17127, 72377, 18559, 21465, 13136, 30446, 49731, 70502, 06239, 10617, and 78469 won NIS 1,000. Tickets ending in 951, 880, 542 and 419 won NIS 100. Tickets ending in 19, 73, 09 and 88 won NIS 30. Tickets ending in 02 and 20 won NIS 20. Tickets ending in 9 and 2 won NIS 10.

A discussion by
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on Jonathan Pollard's life sentence. Why have we ignored
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Yisrael Ba'aliya MK Yuri Stern (right) complains about his party's leadership at a Tel Aviv press conference yesterday, as other party members look on. (Israel Haddari)

Edelstein voted head of Yisrael Ba'aliya central c'tee

By SARAH HONIG

Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein was yesterday elected as Yisrael Ba'aliya central committee chairman, defeating MK Michael Nudelman. The battle was bitter and full of recriminations. Edelstein was seen as the

candidate of the party leadership, headed by Trade and Industry Minister Natan Sharansky. Nudelman was fielded by the internal opposition in Yisrael Ba'aliya, which is spear-headed by MK Yuri Stern.

In the end Edelstein won comfortably, with 245 votes to

Nudelman's 177.

Sharansky sought to put an end to fears that the internal opposition would be subjected to a political vendetta and said Nudelman would play a role in the party's leadership.

Stern earlier summoned a press conference charging that Yisrael Ba'aliya was not run

democratically, that it had no set party rules, and that decisions and appointments are not deliberated and voted upon in party forums.

This, he said, all results from Sharansky's "negligence ... Yisrael Ba'aliya is no one man's piece of private property."

PM, Barak discuss early elections

By SARAH HONIG

Should the government fall as a result of opposition on the Right to redeployment, it would be possible to advance elections to November 10 to coincide with local elections.

This was a scenario mentioned briefly last Tuesday night at a meeting between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Labor Chairman Ehud Barak.

The two-hour meeting, which began near midnight on Tuesday, was initiated by Netanyahu on the eve of his departure for the US for his latest round of talks with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

However, the purpose of the meeting with Barak was not political but in the nature of a briefing by Netanyahu on the talks.

The matter of possible early elections, *The Jerusalem Post* was told by several reliable sources in both large parties, was not touched upon specifically and deliberately, but was mentioned in passing.

It was mentioned, the *Post* was told, in a single sentence, as a last-

resort option in the event the coalition is torn asunder by the redeployment controversy.

This issue was not dwelled upon and not elaborated by either side, it was stressed to the *Post*.

On Wednesday, in fact, Netanyahu said in Washington, that "there is no initiative to advance elections. We have no such plans. There are no intentions to call early elections."

The Prime Minister's Office last night issued a statement saying "there was no discussion whatever of early elections in the meeting between the prime minister and the head of the opposition. No one is proposing early elections, and the matter was not the subject of the meeting."

It was further added that the meeting was not clandestine, as was claimed in some press reports. "This was a routine briefing," the Prime Minister's Office said.

Yet Labor Secretary-General Ra'anana Cohen argued last night that "Netanyahu is not at all trying to quell speculation about early elections. Quite the contrary, it serves his purpose perfectly to intensify this speculation. He is

using it as a whip against the internal opposition within his coalition. He is warning his opponents on the Right that if they impede him, he can punish them by sending them to the polls."

Nevertheless, Cohen said he "warmly advocates advancing election day. This is a dying government and elections might rescue the peace talks, and cure such ills as unemployment, recession, riots in the territories, etc."

An indication of the sort of possible pitfalls Netanyahu faces if he wants to go ahead with some form of redeployment was yesterday furnished by MK Zvi Hendel of the National Religious Party.

Hendel reported that he received a phone call from National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, who is in New York, appealing to him "to mobilize the forces of the Land of Israel Front in the Knesset against Netanyahu's plan of redeploying the IDF in stages. In the first phase, he will yield nine percent, Sharon warned, and then will cede the extra four percent - just as the Americans are demanding."

Milo: I'll resign as mayor if elections are early

By SARAH HONIG

Tel Aviv Mayor Ronni Milo announced yesterday that he "might have to quit the post of Tel Aviv mayor earlier than planned if elections are held early."

Milo was reacting to news that the possibility of early elections was briefly mentioned at a meeting between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Labor Chairman Ehud Barak late Tuesday night.

Having thrown his hat in the prime ministerial ring, Milo pulled out of the Tel Aviv mayoral race but undertook to stay on as mayor for his full term - until after the municipal elections on November 10.

"But if the prime ministerial elections are held in November, then I will have to devote myself to them and won't be able to stay on as mayor," he said yesterday.

Meanwhile, Milo is still striving hard to find anyone of note who will team up with him in his yet-to-be-established centrist list. So far Milo has heard one rejection after another.

Barak aide quits

SARAH HONIG

Tzali Reshef, a founder of Peace Now, announced yesterday that he was quitting as head of Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak's campaign for prime minister.

Reshef cited "personal reasons" as the cause for his decision.

However, party sources assert that he had been dissatisfied and that two developments in recent days were the last straws.

The first was the announcement last week that Oren Shahor, the former coordinator of activities in the territories, would be appointed head of the Labor Party's campaign headquarters for the Knesset. Shahor's office is formally distinct from Barak's personal campaign.

The more recent grievance came this week when Barak proclaimed during a trip to five Samaria settlements that "Beit El and Ofra are here to stay forever." Reshef was described as greatly upset by this.

Congressman: We may cut off PA aid if killers not extradited

By STEVE RODAN

The US Congress might move to stop US aid to the Palestinian Authority until it hands over at least 10 terrorists suspected of killing Americans, a House member said yesterday.

Rep. Matt Salmon, an Arizona Republican and member of the International Relations Committee, said Congress is moving toward cutting off aid to the PA until it extradites terrorists to the US. He said the first step was a letter sent by more than 30 House members to the State and Justice departments for the prosecution of these terrorists.

The second step was unanimous May 5 passage of a resolution calling on the Clinton administration to demand that PA Chairman Yasser Arafat extradite the killers of Americans now seeking refuge in PA territories.

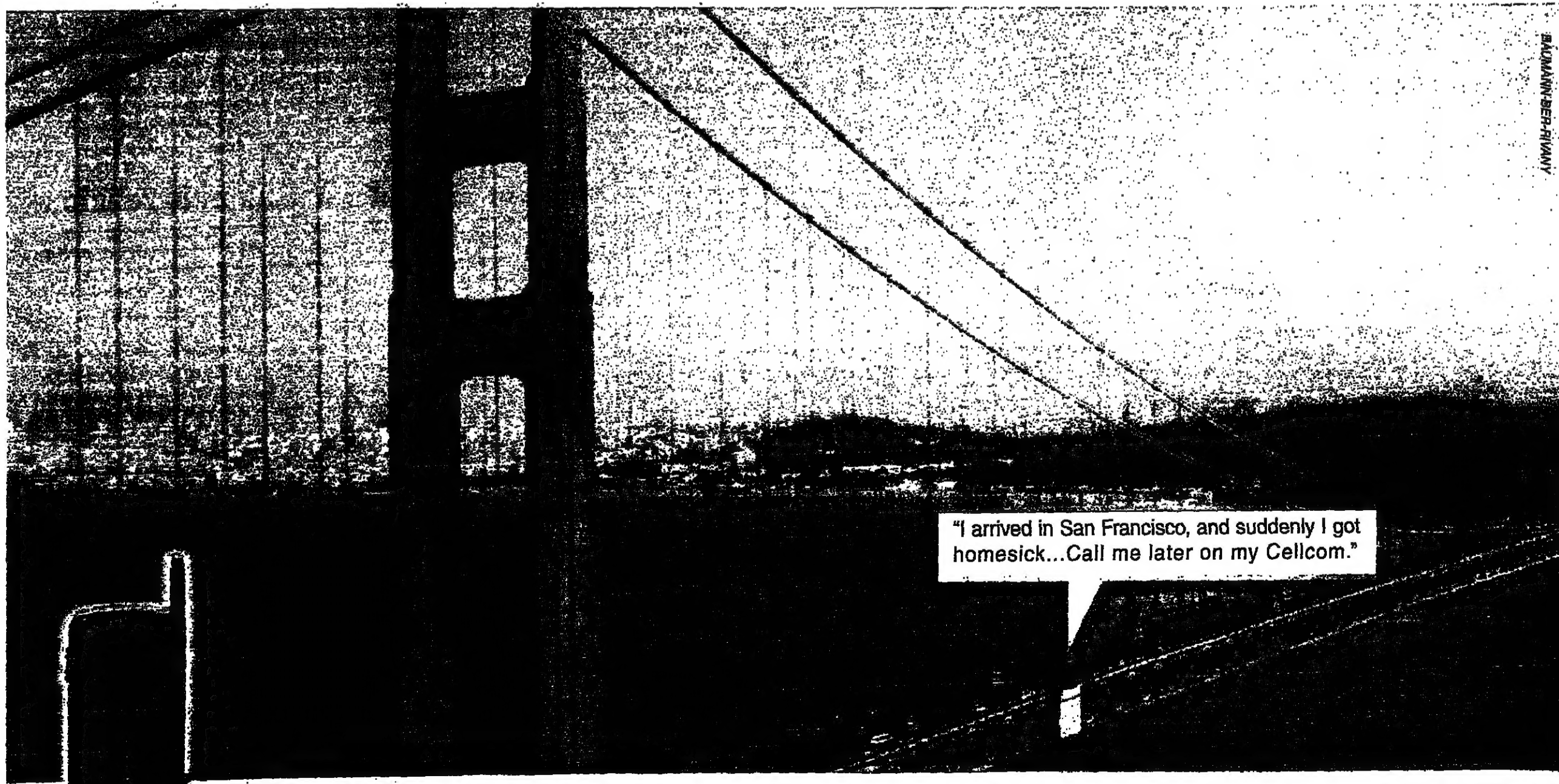
"The third step is that we tie funding to the PA to its compliance with our will," he said in a telephone interview. "It's time to send a message to Arafat: We are not afraid of you. You have got to stop playing this game of cat-and-mouse."

Among the Palestinians Salmon and other House members are seeking to bring to trial in the US are Mahmoud Abu Hamdeh, suspected of leading the gang of suicide

bombers that killed, among others, Yael Borwin in the September 4 bombing on Jerusalem's Rehov Ben-Yehuda; Amjad Hinawi, suspected of killing David Boim in a drive-by shooting near Beit El in May 1996; Nafez Sabih, who allegedly planned the February 1996 bus bombing in Jerusalem in which Matthew Eisenfeld and Sara Duker were killed.

Salmon said he is struck by recent sighting of Palestine Liberation Front leader Mohammed Abul Abbas in Gaza earlier this month. Abul Abbas was the head of the squad that piloted the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* in 1985 and killed American Leon Klinghoffer.

Salmon criticized the Clinton administration for not pressing the issue of the extradition of Palestinian killers of Americans. "So far this administration is more interested in molly-coddling Yasser Arafat and treating him as some kind of superstar," he said. "I'm very very frustrated by this administration. You have Hillary Clinton calling for a Palestinian state. This administration pushing Israel to give more and more and not requiring anything from Arafat. I think this administration should stop trying to achieve a false peace. A false peace is a one-sided peace whereby only Israel gives."



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NEWS

in brief

Arson damages Temple Mount gate

An early morning fire yesterday damaged one of the wooden gates to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, but caused no injuries. "We don't know who did it, but it was arson," said police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby. He said bomb squad experts had found no evidence of explosives, though Moslem guards at the compound who put out the fire reported they had heard a blast outside the gate.

The Palestinian Authority blamed Israeli extremists for what it called an "act of sinful aggression." The acting Jordanian information minister said he holds Israel responsible for the arson. *Elli Wohlgeheimer*

UN torture panel to discuss Israel today

The UN Committee Against Torture will discuss the government's report on the implementation of the UN Convention Against Torture in Geneva today. The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel handed the committee a commentary, which stated that the Israeli report fails to address the use of torture by security forces. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

TAU Board of Governors meeting opens

The Tel Aviv University Board of Governors meeting opens today with committee meetings and award ceremonies. Tomorrow night, delegates will attend a festive dinner marking the jubilee year. Among the events scheduled for next week is the inauguration Tuesday of the Cymbalista Synagogue and Jewish Heritage Center on the university campus. The synagogue is said to be unique here in that there will be an Orthodox synagogue, but also space for conducting Conservative and Reform services. The center will be devoted to fostering academic discussions on bridging the gap between religious and secular. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Collision kills man in Yavne

One man was killed and seven people were wounded yesterday during a car accident at the northern entrance to Yavne. Near Rishon LeZion, eight people were wounded yesterday when a private car collided with another car. In Tel Aviv, the rider of a motor bike was seriously wounded on Rokach Street by a car whose driver went through a red light. *Itim*

Following Moscow synagogue bombing
Jews decry Russian antisemitism

By GARETH JONES

MOSCOW (Reuters) — The Israeli Embassy and Jewish leaders yesterday denounced the bombing of a Moscow synagogue as a sign of rising antisemitism in Russia, and urged the authorities to clamp down on racist violence.

The explosion ripped through the Lubavitch Marina Roshcha synagogue in central Moscow shortly after 11 p.m. on Wednesday. Nobody was seriously hurt in the blast, which police said was triggered by half a kilogram of high explosive.

"Israel condemns this act of sacrilege directed against the Jewish community," the embassy said in a statement.

Ambassador Tzvi Magen told Ekho Moskvy radio he was seeking a meeting with federal and civic leaders and said Russia was not doing enough to stamp out religious and ethnic hatred. "Both in Russia and in other former Soviet republics the activity of pro-fascist organizations not only exists but is increasing," Magen said.

Prominent media and business tycoon Vladimir Gusinsky, who heads the Russian Jewish Congress, also took Russia's leaders to task, saying they were too complacent about the popularity of Nazi symbols and slogans among sections of the country's youth.

"Things have started to take a frightful turn for Russia, when people walk around with swastikas in a country that lost more than 20 million people in the war and where people declare nationalist slogans in a country where every second child comes from a mixed marriage," Gusinsky told Russian television.



Jews pray yesterday morning in front of the Marina Roshcha synagogue in Moscow, which was badly damaged in Wednesday night's bombing. (AP)

President Boris Yeltsin condemned the blast as an act of "barbarism" and said he expected the police to spare no effort in finding the culprits. Interfax news agency reported.

Uncowed by the bombers, Moscow's Jews went ahead with a planned parade yesterday to mark the Lag Ba'omer holiday.

"Today is our Lag Ba'omer holiday, a happy holiday... We're going to parade through the streets to show the pride of the Jewish people and that we are not afraid," Rabbi Berei Lazar said.

Hundreds of people joined the parade, singing and dancing in a festive spirit that contrasted sharply with the devastation at the

synagogue.

Lazar said about 70 children and teachers had left the synagogue just before the explosion. "It was a plain miracle, they were saved by minutes," he said.

Police said one worker building a Jewish community center was slightly injured in the explosion, which shattered windows in nearby buildings and destroyed one

wall of the synagogue, a modern brick building.

The Lubavitch Marina Roshcha synagogue was previously the target of a bombing in August 1996 and an arson attack in 1993.

Lazar said no one had ever been prosecuted for the two earlier attacks on the synagogue and the city authorities had not kept promises of tighter security.

NY judge bans seizure of Nazi-looted paintings

By MARILYN HENRY

In a New York case that pitted museums against claimants of Nazi-looted art, a New York judge has ruled for a museum, saying on Wednesday that the Manhattan district attorney should not have seized two paintings while their disputed ownership was being investigated.

The Manhattan district attorney, Robert Morgenthau, seized two paintings by Egon Schiele last January to prevent the New York Museum of Modern Art, which was exhibiting the works, from returning them to the current owner, the Leopold Foundation of Vienna.

Morgenthau said he will appeal the court ruling.

"We do not believe that New York state should be a safe haven for stolen art," he told *The New York Times*.

Morgenthau seized the paintings — *Portrait of Wally* and *Dead City* — after two families stepped forward to claim them as the legacies of European Jews who had been plundered by the Nazis.

His move was hailed by the claimants, who argued that the paintings would be irrevocably lost if they were allowed to leave the US. But his action also panicked the museum world, which contended that the seizure would have a chilling effect on international exhibitions and the art market.

In a ruling that supported

MOMA, New York State Justice Laura Drager said that state law protects borrowed art from government seizure. She also agreed that preventing the paintings from leaving threatens New York's eminent position in the art world.

"With its vast array of cultural institutions, New York has a unique interest in maximizing the possibility of exhibiting art on loan from other states and around the world," Drager said.

Drager's ruling does not affect the merits of the families' ownership claims.

The district attorney's investigation into paintings that were looted from Jews by the Nazis and that later improperly entered private collections was the first public action in decades to assist individual claimants.

Although the B'nai B'rith National Jewish Museum and the World Jewish Congress each set up art restitution projects, these do not support individual survivors and heirs, who often are compelled to abandon claims because the value of the art is less than the cost of the legal battles to recover it.

The Schiele case proved a special embarrassment for the WJC, which named Ronald Lauder to head its art restitution commission. Lauder, however, is also the head of the MOMA board and had declined to detain the paintings pending a resolution of their ownership.

High Court allows publication of Vanunu petition

By DAN IZENBERG

The High Court of Justice yesterday allowed the publication of a petition submitted by atomic spy Mordechai Vanunu in which he asked the court to order the government to allow him to return to the country from which he had been kidnapped.

Vanunu named the country, but the court, on the advice of the security forces, deleted the name, along with several other words which had appeared in the original petition.

Vanunu argued that there is no longer any reason to prevent him from divulging the details of his abduction because the security forces had changed their policy toward him and are no longer keeping him in isolation from other prisoners.

In January, the government announced "that the director of security in the Ministry of Internal Security no longer insists that Vanunu be held in isolation," Vanunu wrote in the petition.

"This means that he is allowing the petitioner [Vanunu] to disclose those details which until now were banned from publication. It was in order to prevent disclosure of the details that I was held in isolation for 11 years in Ashkelon Prison."

Vanunu revealed that he was brought to Israel in a yacht and that the security forces of another country were involved in the abduction. He said that the government of the country on whose behalf the special forces operated did not know about the abduction.

"There is no doubt that foreign secret service agents were involved in my abduction, such as the secret services of [deleted]," he wrote.

"During the sea voyage, I was told by one of the abductors on the yacht that [deleted] were on board. That means all of them were involved in the crime of the abduction, and I claim that they all cooperated with Israel as part of their campaign to disseminate nuclear weapons throughout the

world, including Israel, and that the foreign secret service men who took part in the abduction did so without the knowledge or permission of their government."

Vanunu charged that during his incarceration, "I was tortured and tortured by the Israeli espionage services, the General Security Service, the Mossad, and the psychological warfare unit. Thus, the aim of the isolation was to try and cover up the abduction and the defense establishment's failure to keep secret its program to develop atomic, hydrogen, and neutron weapons."

Vanunu wrote that in the course of his trial on charges of treason and espionage, he had asked the High Court to release him on the grounds that he had been brought to Israel illegally. The court rejected the argument. Afterward, the High Court rejected several petitions asking it to allow the details of the abduction to be revealed and to order the police to investigate the "crime" of his kidnapping.

Survey: 75% of Jerusalem is religious

Some 75 percent of Jerusalem's total population is religious, 12.3% of it national religious, according to a study released yesterday by the Jerusalem Center for

Public Affairs.

The national-religious component is often not considered in demographic studies of Jerusalem, which usually take into account only secular Jews and haredim.

The study notes that national-religious are less likely to leave the city than other groups. It also concludes that they, along with the traditional and haredi residents, want to preserve the traditional character of the city, and thus the

general assumption that a haredi minority is trying to impose its values on a majority of Jerusalem's population has no basis in fact. *(Itim)*

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Tuesday, May 19, 1998 Conference Room A' adjacent to the Mondon Hasegel Wednesday, May 20, 1998 Conference Room B' Beit Hasegud For additional information: 07 6461101, 07 6461102 The conference proceedings will be in English

Alix de Rothschild Award for Fiber Art

The Israel Crafts Foundation invites applications for the 1998 Award which this year will be for Fiber Art.

To receive an application form, send a stamped addressed (23 cm. x 11 cm.) envelope to Director, Ruth Cornan, c/o Tali Kohn, D.N. North Yehuda, POB 161, Bet Horon 90935.

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the custom

Hadera man kills wife

By DAVID RUDGE

A man stabbed his wife to death at their home in Hadera early yesterday morning while their two frightened young children were nearby, helpless to prevent the tragedy.

The youngsters, a nine-year-old boy and his seven-year-old sister, responded to cries for help from their mother and even tried to take the blood-stained knife away from their father, with the girl being cut in the process, according to accounts the children later told relatives.

The youngsters eventually managed to call their grandmother, who alerted the police and Magen David Adom.

Hadera police station head, Ch. Supt. Lior Boker told reporters that Gratzia Barda, 36, a teacher, was already dead when police arrived. Her husband, Yehoshua, 37, was still in the room and was arrested.

Barda, who has been unemployed for some time and has been on medication for epilepsy, admitted stabbing his wife to death during the course of an argument.

Boker said it appeared the couple had argued over money problems and outstanding debts. The two children had been asleep in a

separate room at the time and were awakened by the shouting, he said.

The children apparently went into their parents' bedroom and saw their father holding the blood-stained knife and their mother lying on the floor.

Magen David Adom paramedics were called to the scene and tried to resuscitate Gratzia, but to no avail. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Boker said the only time a complaint had been lodged with the police was in 1996, when both the wife and the husband charged each other with having made threats of violence.

The case was eventually closed, and there was no further indication of any serious domestic trouble between the couple until police were called to the scene of the murder, said Boker.

Gratzia's sister told reporters that the couple had argued over many things "like any couple," but there had been no signs of violence and all the family were in shock over the murder.

"My sister worked all her life ever since she finished studying," she said. "She was a teacher. Her husband had a private business which failed and he was out of work for a long time."

She said her brother-in-law had

also been sick and her sister had always ensured that he took his medication.

She said the children had been taken in by her mother, their grandmother, and were also receiving psychological counselling.

"People have to complain to the police, because only then can they be of help," she said. "It's a crying shame that my sister didn't do that."

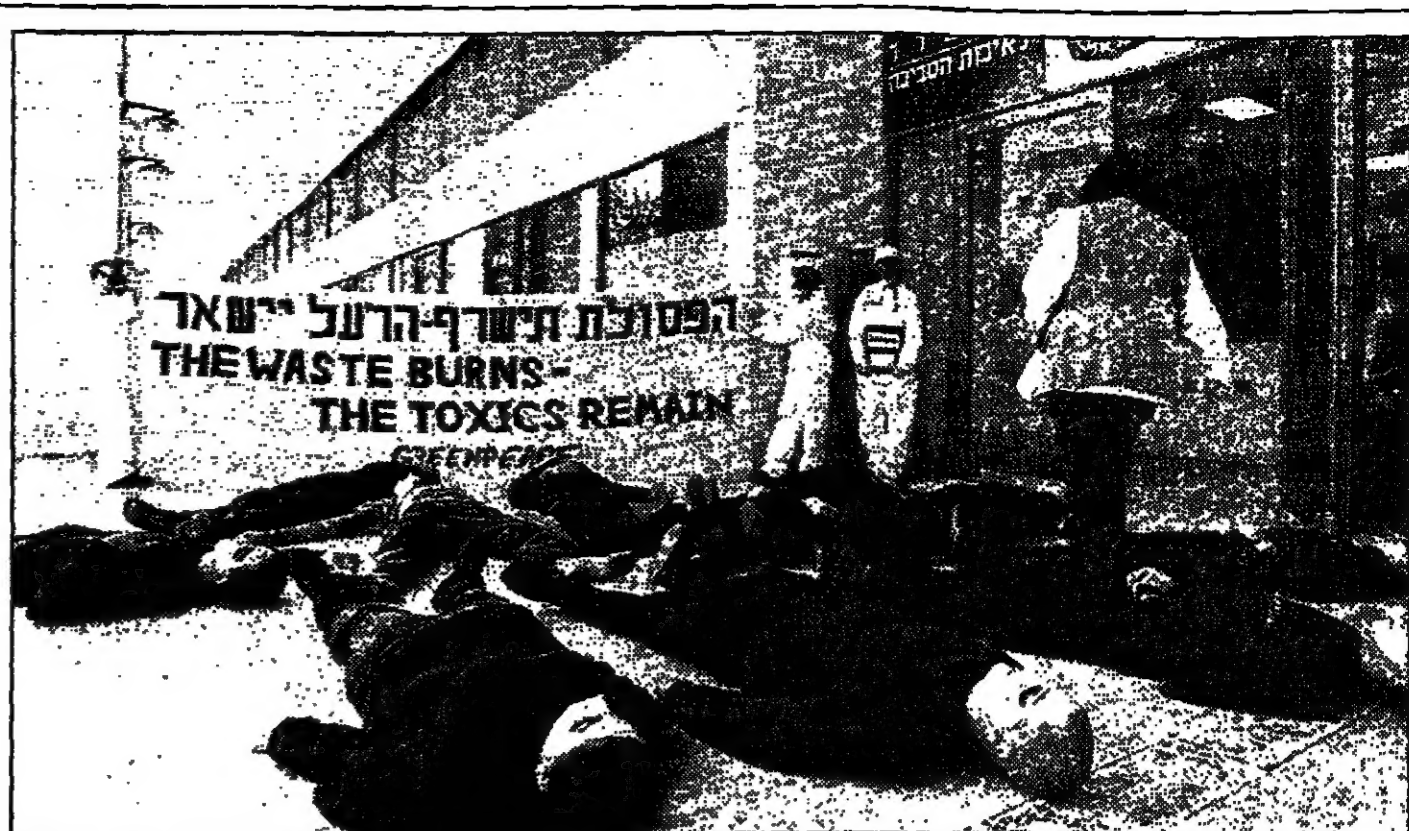
In a separate incident in Ramat Aviv yesterday morning, a woman stabbed and moderately hurt her common-law husband during an argument between the couple in their apartment.

The woman was arrested and the man, suffering from stab wounds in the chest and stomach, was taken to Tel Aviv's Ichilov Hospital for treatment.

The 32-year-old woman told police she had ordered the man to leave their home. He refused and started to throw objects at her. He tried to attack her with a kitchen knife, which he then put down and tried to strangle her.

The woman said she managed to pick up the knife and stabbed him in self defense.

Police said it appeared that both the man and the woman suffered from emotional problems.



Burning mad

Greenpeace activists play dead at the entrance to Environment Ministry headquarters in Jerusalem yesterday, to protest against the use of an incinerator at the Ramat Hovav toxic waste site. Ministry officials said the incinerator meets international safety standards and is the only viable solution for the huge accumulation of toxic waste at the site. (Text: Lior Collins; Photo: Miki Shtei)

Key IDF promotions expected next week

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

Appointments to at least four key posts in the General Staff are to be decided within a week, defense sources said yesterday.

Chief of General Staff-designate Maj.-Gen. Shaul Mofaz has been holding consultations with the IDF's top generals and is expected to bring his recommendations to Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai no later than the middle of next week.

The most senior post to be filled is that of deputy chief of general staff, the post Mofaz is vacating. The top candidate is said to be OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan.

Dayan, who is older and more experienced than Mofaz, is said to be reluctant to abandon his sensitive position before his three-year term is up. Dayan has held the job for two years. But defense sources say he is under heavy pressure to accept the No. 2 slot.

OC Intelligence Branch Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon is seen as the likely successor to OC Northern Command Maj.-Gen. Amiram Levine, who will become deputy head of the Mossad this summer.

In his first public comments since he was named to succeed Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Mofaz said yesterday the promotions would be based on merit.

"They will be pertinent, professional and totally clean," Mofaz told Channel 1, during a visit to the Galilee.

Mofaz downplayed media criticism that he was too inexperienced for the job.

"That is behind me. I am about to be the IDF chief of general staff. I want to speak on that level and I don't want to deal with the past."

Defense officials said that other promotions have been put on hold for now. These include the heads of the Manpower Branch, the Logistics and Technology Branch and the military colleges.

Mordechai's choice of Mofaz over Maj.-Gen. Matan Vilnai has not led to any visible protest in the IDF.

Sources close to Mordechai insist that the defense minister had never promised Vilnai the job of chief of general staff, and that the decision was one of the most difficult he had every made.

Concern grows over rise in murders in North

By DAVID RUDGE

Police in the northern region are deeply concerned over the growing number of murders and cases of violence.

Ch.-Supt. Boaz Goldberg, spokesman for the region, said there had already been 31 cases of murder in the North so far this year, compared to 32 throughout the whole of 1997.

He said that five of those cases involved domestic violence that had ended in murder, including the killing early yesterday of Hadera teacher Gratzia Barda, 36, by her husband.

"The figures certainly give cause for concern especially with [the approach of] the long, hot summer when tempers tend to flare even quicker," Goldberg said.

He added that another problem is the approach of municipal elections, which have previously ignited violence, especially in the Arab sector.

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ESTHER DANZIGER

passed away peacefully
in Johannesburg, South Africa on Friday, 8th May, 1998.
Dearly beloved mother of Pauline Borsuk and mother-in-law of Morris
Grandmother of Arlene and Sasson, Janice and Zvika.
Sadly missed by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren in Israel

On the *shloshim* after the passing of

Rabbi Dr. EPHRAIM SHIMOFF

the *hakamat matzeva* (unveiling) will take place on
Tuesday, May 19, 1998 (23 Iyar 5758) at 6 p.m. at the
Eretz Hachaim Cemetery (near Beit Shemesh).
Call 02-999-2794 for details.

On the thirtieth day after the passing of our dear

BERTA PLUZNIK

we shall visit the grave, unveil the tombstone
and hold a memorial service - on Sunday, May
17, 1998 (21 Iyar 5758) at 3:30 p.m.,
in Kiryat Shaul Cemetery.
We shall meet at the main gate.

Israel Pluznik
Evelyn Jacobson-Pluznik

On the *shloshim* of the passing of our
beloved

RETA RACHEL BEHR

the *azkara* and unveiling of the tombstone
will take place on Wednesday,
May 20, 1998 at 5:30 p.m.
at the Segula Cemetery, Petah Tikva.
We shall meet at the dome.

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing our
beloved mother and grandmother

RENEE (Mimi) CLAR

The funeral will take place today,
Friday, May 15, 1998 (19 Iyar 5758) at 10:30 a.m.
at the Kiryat Shaul Cemetery.
We will meet at the gate.

Mourning by:

Her daughter and son-in-law, Michaela and Ami Orren
Grandchildren, Nir, Kamit and Noam

Shiva at the home of the deceased, 4 Zirelson St., Tel Aviv.



The Chaim Sheba Medical Center
Tel Hashomer

mourns the passing of

MAURICE GOLDSCHLEGER

A dear friend and
great benefactor of our hospital

The unveiling of the Matzevah of our beloved

Dr. MANFRED R. LEHMANN

will take place, א"ח on the 1st Yahrzeit

ב"נ א"ח, חשון

Tuesday, May 19, 1998

Har Hamenuhot, Givat Shaul, Jerusalem

We will meet at the main gate at 4.30 p.m.

Wife: Sara Anne Lehmann
Daughters: Barbie and Yitzchok Siegel
Karen and David Eisner
Brothers: Erik and Bert Lehmann



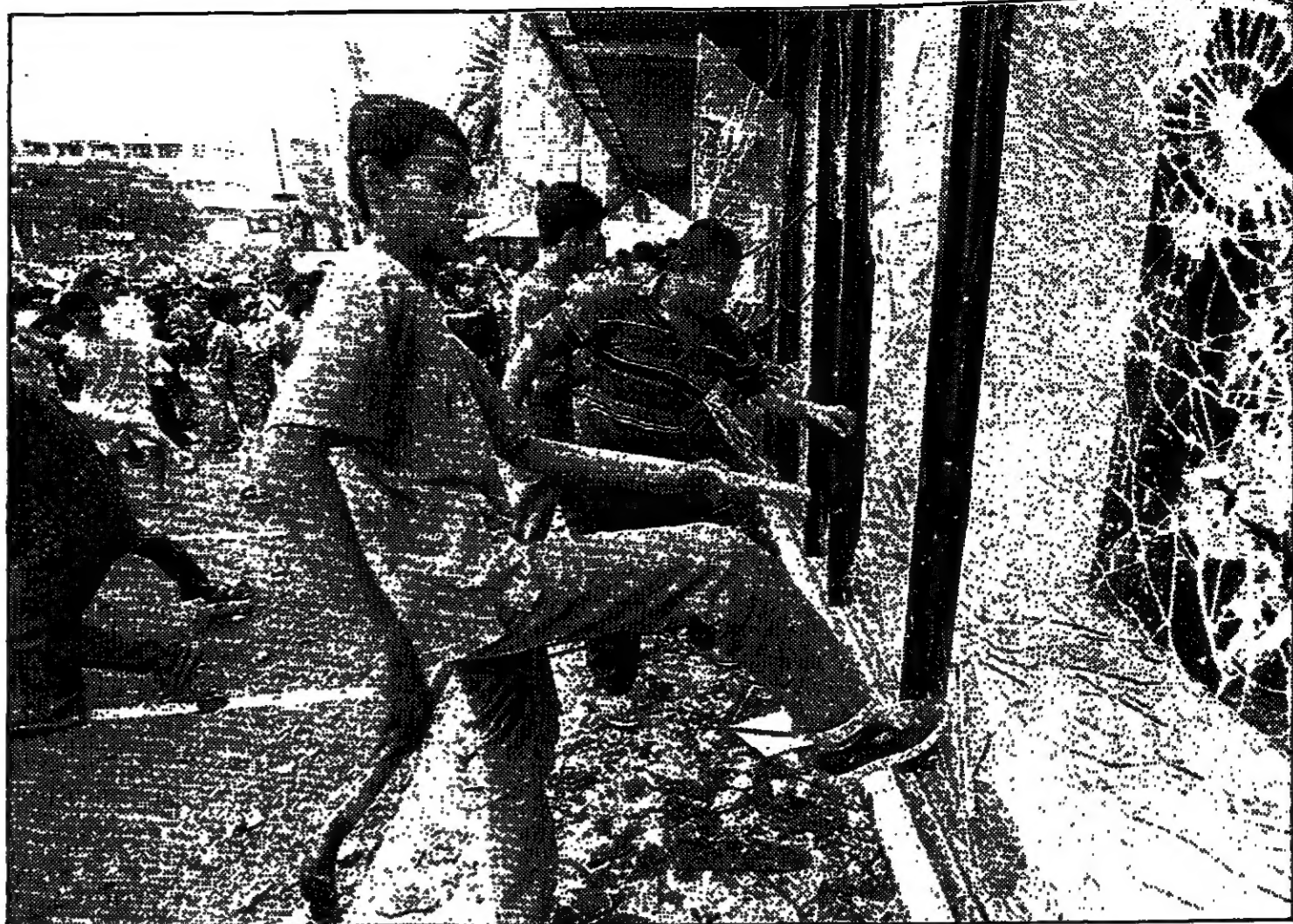
The President & Board of Governors of the Technion
and the whole Technion Family

mourn the untimely passing of

ITZHAK MODA'I

a social and economic leader, a statesman
and a pillar of the State of Israel.
Member of the Board of Governors
and Chairman of the "100 Club" of the
Technion Alumni Association

Mobs rampage; Suharto may quit



Looters storm a film shop in Jakarta yesterday. Anti-Suharto demonstrations accelerated as the capital saw its worst violence in more than three decades. (AP)

JAKARTA (Reuters) - Mobs rampaged unchecked yesterday in Jakarta's worst riots in over three decades, while Indonesian President Suharto said he would step down rather than use force to cling to power against the people's wishes.

Plumes of smoke dotted the landscape in the capital as thousands of youths looted shops in business areas and set buildings and vehicles on fire.

Banks, supermarkets, electronics stores and bakeries were broken into, looted and torched across wide areas of the city.

Troops and armed police were seen among the crowds but made little discernible effort to intervene.

The main highway to the airport was closed, although the airport itself still functioned.

The Red Cross said it knew of five wounded people taken to hospital, but there was no other word of casualties.

At least 18 people have been killed in the capital this week as protests against Suharto, who has ruled for 32 years, turned violent. Residents said it was the worst violence in the city since the riots at the time of Suharto's ascension to power.

At least half a million people were killed in anti-Communist attacks across the nation in the mid-1960s after what the government has called an abortive Communist coup.

Suharto has cut short his visit to Egypt and was expected home early today.

Suharto's surprise remarks - the first time he has indicated he may be prepared to step aside - initially boosted the rupiah, but doubts quickly set in that the autocratic former general planned to go any time soon and the currency fell again.

He was quoted by local newspapers as saying on Wednesday during a state visit to Egypt that he was willing to step down "if I am no longer trusted."

"I will not use force of arms [to stay in office]," he said. "I will become a sage and endeavour to get closer to God," newspapers quoted 76-year-old Suharto as

telling Indonesian residents of Cairo. "I will guide from behind."

There was much skepticism he would do so.

"I don't believe him a single iota," said powerful Moslem leader Amien Rais, one of the president's most prominent critics. "I don't believe him until he says it before the public in my country in a forceful statement."

Rais heads the Muhammadiyah group, which claims 28 million members, a large chunk of the Moslem-majority nation's 200

million people. He was speaking in the town of Yogyakarta.

As news of the rioting spread, almost all shops in Jakarta closed. Trading on the currency, commodity and stock markets dwindled to a near-standstill and banks in the central business district shut down.

The rupiah was trading at about 11,100 to the dollar in the afternoon, off an earlier low of below 11,500. The composite stock index was almost flat at 402 points in afternoon trade, boosted by arbitrage buying as the rupiah

fell.

A cameraman saw about 400 people rampaging through the largely ethnic Chinese Hayam Wuruk district, smashing windows and raiding shops.

"Come on in," shouted one fresh-faced youth, after using a crowbar to smash the glass doors of a bank. People could be seen carrying off television sets, plastic bags full of groceries and one man took away a refrigerator in a hand-cart.

Police fired in the air near the University of Indonesia to scatter

students taking to the streets, but were chased away and replaced by marine commandos, who could be seen shaking hands and chatting with the students.

There is a widespread belief that the military will ultimately side with protesters against Suharto, while the police are seen as his supporters.

The ethnic Chinese minority, who form less than five percent of Indonesia's population but account for 80% of its wealth, have taken the brunt of much of the rioting.

Suharto's would-be successors already lining up

SYDNEY (Reuters) - Indonesian President Suharto's 32-year reign is doomed and the transfer of power could be either a bloody battle in the streets or a smooth succession within the establishment, analysts in Australia said yesterday.

"We are now witnessing the death throes of the regime," Gerry van Klinken of Sydney University's School of Asian Studies said.

"Whether he is prepared to step down or not, he is going."

Analysts generally believed that Indonesia's influential military will play a pivotal role in deciding a successor to Suharto as leader of the sprawling archipelago of 200 million.

Within Indonesia itself there is a widespread belief that the military will ultimately side with protesters against Suharto, while the police are seen as his supporters.

"The military have to make a choice between supporting the people and supporting the old men," former dissident Aries Budiman said of 76-year-old Suharto in an interview.

That view was echoed by George Aditjondro, an exiled academic leader based in Australia. "Now there is the juggling for power of succession." At least 18 people have been killed in the capital Jakarta this week as protests against Suharto turned violent.

It is the worst unrest to hit Indonesia since Suharto came to power in 1966.

"The worst case is a continued escalation of what we've been seeing, with more deaths of students," Van Klinken said.

Suharto, who has cut short a visit to Egypt, was reported by the Indonesian media yesterday as saying he would give up power if

BACKGROUND

Indonesians no longer trusted him. Analysts said he was more likely to take a constitutional path and hand power to Vice President Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie in an attempt to circumvent or at least delay a confrontation with the army.

However, it was unlikely the army would support the technocrat Habibie, who has virtually no power base of his own.

"I think they'll end up getting rid of Habibie as well," said Dr. Harold Crouch, senior fellow in Indonesian politics at the Australian National University.

Analysts see defence minister and army chief general Wiranto

and ambitious Lieutenant-General Prabowo Subianto, commander of the army's Kostrad strategic reserve and Suharto's son-in-law, as the two main military players.

"Prabowo and Wiranto are the ones who are in charge of the troops, who are the two centers of power," Crouch said.

"Wiranto would be the one who has the loyalty of the military, whereas Prabowo is the sort of person who breaks the rules, who's a bit of a maverick in a way."

Analysts doubted Wiranto would make a direct push for power. The military could either back another member of Suharto's government or one of the main opposition leaders, they said.

Van Klinken said Giandjar Kartasasmita, Indonesia's top economics minister, was emerging as a candidate because he was seen as being able to address the crippling

Indonesian financial crisis that prompted the rioting.

He was also perceived as a man capable of dealing with the International Monetary Fund, which attached strict reform conditions to a \$40 billion-plus bailout package when Indonesia's rupiah currency plummeted after a banking crisis.

"Giandjar has the potential to be a popular leader and is somebody who can handle the IMF and there wouldn't need to be a coup for him to acquire more power," Van Klinken said.

Crouch agreed, saying the army knew it would not be able to tackle Indonesia's economic troubles by itself.

"I'm sure the military leadership is very worried about the economy and they know that they don't understand economics and they need somebody who does," he said.

India counting cost of nuclear sanctions

By CHAITANYA KALBAG

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - India woke up yesterday to the first full day of biting sanctions ordered by a furious US after a series of underground nuclear tests provoked outrage from around the world.

Global condemnation continued to rain down on India's defiant coalition government. President Bill Clinton called the tests a "terrible mistake" and slapped India with sanctions estimated by the White House at more than \$20 billion.

India surprised an already dismayed world on Wednesday by announcing two more nuclear tests, two days after a trio of experimental blasts, its first in 24 years.

China, after a low-key reaction to the initial set of explosions, used harsher words on Thursday, saying it was "deeply shocked" by Wednesday's tests.

A statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry said India's allegations that Beijing posed a nuclear threat were "utterly groundless."

"This gratuitous accusation by Beijing against China is solely for the purpose of finding excuses for the development of its nuclear weapons," the statement said.

The mood continued to be jubilant at home, however, and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was mobbed by admiring crowds setting off firecrackers and shouting

slogans outside his official residence in New Delhi.

First reactions from a host of US firms with investments in India indicated a wait-and-watch attitude with most saying they wanted to study the sanctions' implications.

No major pull-outs have been announced.

A senior Vajpayee aide told Reuters the prime minister was concerned about the huge outpouring of euphoria over the tests.

"We don't want too much euphoria, because we'll have to come down back to earth," he said.

"What we have done is for our national security and not to create dangers for anybody or generate fear," Vajpayee said, after the government declared it had concluded its series of tests.

Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha refused to be alarmed by the specter of sanctions delivering a body blow to an economy already in the doldrums.

"I see no reason for any great concern at this stage," Sinha told Reuters late on Wednesday.

India's markets were not reassured by the comments.

A senior Indian official said hours after Wednesday's blasts that the government had weighed the effects of retaliatory sanctions.

"Of course, this will affect India. How badly, we will see. I am sure [sanctions] will hurt the economy, but we are not going to be a pariah state."

New Delhi now had a "credible nuclear deterrent" and wanted to be treated as a nuclear weapons state in test ban negotiations that it would not join unconditionally.

NATO vote strains Italy government

By PHILIP PULLELLA

ROME (Reuters) - Strains appeared in Prime Minister Romano Prodi's government yesterday after the hard-left Communist Refoundation Party, which supports the majority in parliament, voted against the enlargement of NATO and warned of a government crisis.

The party voted against a Senate resolution on Wednesday night on the enlargement of the alliance to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

The measure passed in the upper house late on Wednesday night with a vote of 116-9, with three abstentions.

Refoundation has 11 seats in the Senate and the government does not depend on the party for its majority in the upper house, where the resolution passed overwhelmingly with the help of the center-right opposition and centrist parties.

But Prodi's government, which marks its second anniversary in office on Saturday, faces a real danger in the lower house, where the government relies on Refoundation's 34 seats for its majority.

The vote on the resolution is expected to go to the lower house in the next few days.

The opposition centre-right Freedom Alliance led by former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi is expected to vote in favor of the NATO resolution in the lower house as well.

ברוך דין חזקוני

We deeply regret to announce the passing, after a long and productive life, of the distinguished Rebbitzen:

Dr. JUDITH GRUNFELD

Widow of Dr. Yehiel Grunfeld ז"ל, Dr. Yehiel Grunfeld of the London Beth Din; daughter of Rav Shmaya Halevi Rosenbaum ז"ל

Who over decades returned Jewish girls and children to their heritage and maintained them in the traditions of the fathers. In Poland, she assisted Rebbitzen Sarah Shinerer ז"ל in founding the Bais Yaakov movement. She later founded and led the first Jewish schools for refugees in Sheffield and London with Rabbi Dr. Solomon Schonfeld ז"ל.

The funeral will leave today, Friday, at 8:30 a.m. from the Shagar Funeral Parlor to Har Hamenuhot.

Mourning by:

Families Grunfeld and Cohn - London
Her sons, daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
For information please call: 02-652-8463.

אברהם יצחק

THE JERUSALEM POST

Reader

Dear Reader,

We at *The Jerusalem Post* are committed to satisfying our readers' needs and interests. To help us make our newspaper more appealing to you, we would appreciate your taking a few minutes to fill in this questionnaire. We guarantee the information gathered here will be kept strictly confidential. With your help, we believe we can make the *Post* even better.

To show our appreciation for the time you're taking to fill in the survey, those submitting complete entries will participate in a drawing for two luxurious holiday packages provided by the Isrotel hotel chain.

Section A: Satisfaction

1. A) What is the relative importance of the following sections in the *Post* to you?

1. B) How satisfied are you with the following coverage?

In the following questions please circle the number which best describes your opinion (1=Not Satisfied; 5=Very Satisfied).

Local News

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

International News

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Arts & Entertainment

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Opinion Columns

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Book Reviews

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Business & Finance

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Sports

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Comics

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Science News

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Health News

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Family Matters

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

At Home

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Living

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

News in Focus

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Magazine

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Time Out/TV Listings

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

In Jerusalem/City Lights

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

Weekender Section

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5
Satisfaction: 1 2 3 4 5

2. What new or expanded features, if any, would you like to see in the paper?

1. Real estate
2. Personal advertisements
3. Short stories/fiction

4. Local news of your city/community
5. Jewish world
6. None
7. Your ideas _____

In the following questions please circle the number which best describes your opinion (1=Not Satisfied; 5=Very Satisfied).

3. How would you describe your general satisfaction with *The Jerusalem Post* (circle the answer that best describes your feeling)?

Not Satisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Very Satisfied

4. How satisfied are you with the layout and graphic design of the daily *Jerusalem Post*?

1 2 3 4 5

5. How satisfied are you with the design of the Magazine?

1 2 3 4 5

6. How satisfied are you with Time Out's design?

1 2 3 4 5

7. How satisfied are you with the design of our local supplements in Jerusalem and City Lights?

1 2 3 4 5

The following questions concern your opinion of specific columnists.

Please circle the number which best describes your opinion of each columnist.

(1= Poor, 5= Excellent). If you are not familiar with a specific columnist or have no opinion, circle 6= Don't know.

Yosef Goell 1 2 3 4 5 6

Charles Krauthammer 1 2 3 4 5 6

Yossi Olmert 1 2 3 4 5 6

Yossi Ben-Aharon 1 2 3 4 5 6

Efraim Inbar 1 2 3 4 5 6

Evelyn Gordon 1 2 3 4 5 6

Yossi Beilin 1 2 3 4 5 6

David Newman 1 2 3 4 5 6

David Kinche 1 2 3 4 5 6

Ruthie Blum 1 2 3 4 5 6

Pinchas Landau 1 2 3 4 5 6

Uri Dan/Dennis Eisenberg 1 2 3 4 5 6

Daniel Doron 1 2 3 4 5 6

Daoud Kuttab 1 2 3 4 5 6

10. How do you rate the following Friday columnists?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent Don't know 6

Thomas O'Dwyer (Column One) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Alex Berlyne (With Prejudice) 1 2 3 4 5 6

11. How do you rate the following cartoonists/illustrators?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent Don't know 6

Meir Ronnen 1 2 3 4 5 6

Oleg 1 2 3 4 5 6

Dry Bones 1 2 3 4 5 6

G.H. Freedman (Mivchan America'i) 1 2 3 4 5 6

12. How would you define the paper's stand on religious issues?

too religious 1 2 3 4 5 too secular

13. How would you define the paper's editorial line?

1 very left-wing 2 left of center 3 center 4 right of center 5 very right-wing

14. How do you rate the paper's editorial line?

poor 1 2 3 4 5 excellent

Section B: Purchasing Trends

15. How do you get *The Jerusalem Post*?

1. Home subscription
2. Office subscription
3. Hotel

2. Single, never married
3. Widowed
4. Separated or divorced

22. If you live in Israel, where do you live?

1. Jerusalem area
2. Tel Aviv area
3. Hasharon area
4. Haifa and the north
5. Beersheba and the south
6. Judea Samaria

23. What is your religion?

1. Jewish
2. Moslem
3. Christian
4. None/other

24. If you are Jewish, What is your religious orientation?

1. Orthodox
2. Conservative
3. Reform
4. Secular

25. How would you describe your proficiency in the following languages?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent
English: 1 2 3 4 5
Hebrew: 1 2 3 4 5
Arabic: 1 2 3 4 5

26. What is your country of origin?

1. Israel
2. United States
3. Canada
4. United Kingdom, Ireland
5. Australia, New Zealand
6. South Africa
7. Germany
8. Elsewhere, please indicate: _____

27. What is your residential status in Israel?

1. Israeli citizen
2. Diplomat
3. Foreigner working in Israel
4. Tourist

28. What is your formal education?

1. High school
2. BA or equivalent
3. MA or equivalent
4. Ph.D. or equivalent

29. The average net household income in Israel is NIS 5,500. Is your household net income below average, average or above average?

1. Much below average
2. Below average
3. Average
4. Above average
5. Much above average

30. Which of the following best represents your employment status?

1. Self employed
2. Employee
3. Soldier
4. Housewife
5. Retired
6. Unemployed or looking for work

Thank You

for participating in this survey. Please put this questionnaire in a stamped envelope and send it to:

Reader Survey
The Jerusalem Post
P.O. Box 81
91000 Jerusalem

In order to be eligible to win a great holiday package at The King Solomon Palace in Eilat or the Ramon Inn in Mitzpe Ramon you must provide the following details. Only complete survey forms will be entered in the drawing.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (Day) _____

(Evening) _____

Subscriber: ☐ Yes ☐ No

All questionnaires must be received by May 27, 1998. The drawing will be held at The Jerusalem Post Building on May 28. Winners will be notified by phone and their names will be published in the *Post* on May 29.

(Jerusalem Post employees and their families are ineligible).

Take a few moments to help us make The Jerusalem Post even better and you could win one of the following valuable holiday packages:

- * 3 days and 2 nights for two at the luxurious King Solomon Palace Hotel in Eilat on bed & breakfast basis.
- * 3 days and 2 nights for two adults and two children at the Ramon Inn in Mitzpe Ramon on a full-board basis.

KING SOLOMON'S PALACE



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RAMON INN



8. How do you rate the following columnists?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent Don't know 6

Orly Aharoni (Hebrew Press Review) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Meir Ronnen (At the Auctions) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Judy Siegel (New Worlds, Rx for Readers) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Michal Sela (Palestinian Press Review) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Herb Keison (In Context) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Sam Orbaum (Not Page One) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Allison Kaplan-Sommer (Home Front) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Nina Gilbert (Building Blocks) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Yosef Begun (Russian Press Review) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Avinoam Bar-Yosef (Agenda) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Barry Rubin (The Region) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Ruth Mason (Parenting) 1 2 3 4 5 6

D'vora Ben-Shaul (Heads'n'Tails, Earthly Concerns) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Ruthie Blum (Dear Ruthie) 1 2 3 4 5 6

9. How do you rate the following weekday opinion columnists?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent Don't know 6

David Weinberg 1 2 3 4 5 6

Danny Bloch 1 2 3 4 5 6

Alan Dershowitz 1 2 3 4 5 6

Bernard Wasserstein 1 2 3 4 5 6

Amotz Ass-El (Middle Israel) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Moshe Arens 1 2 3 4 5 6

Moshe Zak 1 2 3 4 5 6

Gerald Steinberg 1 2 3 4 5 6

Mark Heller 1 2 3 4 5 6

Jonathan Rosenblum 1 2 3 4 5 6

Greer Fay Cashman (Grapevine) 1 2 3 4 5 6

10. How do you rate the following Magazine columnists?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent Don't know 6

Calev Ben-David (Snap Judgment) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Liat Collins (Scene and Heard) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Jeff Abramowitz (Surfing the Net) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Jeff Green (Reading from Right to Left) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Sraya Shapiro (Past Tense) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Moshe Kohn (A View from Nov) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Shlomo Riskin (Shabbat Shalom) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Faye Levy (Food) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Haim Shapiro (Matters of Taste) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Phyllis Glazer (Feedback & Phyllis' Notebook) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Noga Tarnopolsky (At the Chef's Table) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Sam Orbaum (But Seriously) 1 2 3 4 5 6

4. Regular daily purchase
5. Regular Friday purchase
6. I get it from a friend
7. Occasional purchase

16. If you have a subscription, how would you rate the delivery service?

poor 1 2 3 4 5 excellent

17. How frequently do you read any of the following newspapers?

never 1 2 3 4 5 rarely biweekly weekly daily

Yediot Aharonot

1 2 3 4 5

Ma'ariv

1 2 3 4 5

Ha'aretz

1 2 3 4 5

Herald Tribune

1 2 3 4 5

18. Why do you read *The Jerusalem Post*?

1. It's my main source of information
2. I need it for my work
3. I find reading Hebrew difficult
4. I enjoy reading an English-language newspaper
5. To improve my English
6. It suits my political/religious outlook
7. I enjoy certain regular features
8. Other

Section C: Demographic Information

19. What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female

20. What is your age?

1. Up to 25
2. 26-35
3. 36-45
4. 46-55
5. 56-70
6. 70+

21. What is your marital status?

1. Married

THE JERUSALEM POST

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NORMAN SPECTOR President & Publisher
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CARL SCHRAG Managing Editor
AMOTZ ASA-EL Associate Editor

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India's terrible example

An aide to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee crowed that India's surprise nuclear weapons tests show that India is a "great power." Judging from the widespread support for the tests within that country, the people of India agree.

Yet once the euphoria passes, India will be left with a primitive definition of greatness that ill befits a peaceful and democratic nation.

By upping the ante in the global nuclear contest, India has endangered all democracies, including itself.

In a letter of explanation to US President Bill Clinton, Vajpayee cited the "deteriorating security environment," in which China, an overt nuclear power with an open border dispute with India, has helped another rival, Pakistan, develop an undeclared nuclear capability.

Israel, of all countries, is certainly in a position to sympathize with the argument that nuclear weapons are an unfortunate necessity in a dangerous neighborhood. What India has failed to establish is why it is necessary to not only possess nuclear weapons but to flaunt them.

Though the Indian government denies political motivations, the ruling BJP party campaigned with the idea of "inducting" nuclear weapons into its arsenal. It acted knowing that tests would be received with overwhelming popular approval. While strategic considerations may have been a motivating factor, the decision seems to have been driven by political motivations that are barely hidden.

For years, India has complained bitterly about "nuclear apartheid" — the double standard that differentiates between the first five overt members of the nuclear "club" and the rest of the world. It has not escaped India's notice that the P-5, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, are also the world's only declared nuclear powers. India's declared reason for not signing the two major nuclear treaties, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, is their "discriminatory" nature.

India's approach, however, amounts to using legitimate grievances to justify harmful actions.

Though the nations of the nuclear club have been cutting their arsenals, they show no signs of fundamentally reorganizing the strategic nuclear map following the end of the Cold War. Farfetched as it may now seem, the collapse of the Soviet Union presented a golden opportunity to all but eliminate nuclear weapons, leaving only a small, perhaps multinationally controlled force to deter rogue states.

The failure of the West to set an example by moving towards radical nuclear disarmament

does not, however, excuse India's move in the opposite direction. Two wrongs, especially when nuclear-tipped, do not make a right. The spread of nuclear weapons is only in the interest of aggressive dictatorships. It is the rogue states, not the democracies, that might use nuclear weapons for aggression or for blackmail.

India is thus more likely to be a victim of its own step up the nuclear ladder, than a beneficiary. India's tests will not only make Pakistani tests likely, it encourages the mind-set that nuclear weapons contribute to national greatness.

If it is worthwhile for India, a country where half the people are illiterate and 70 percent lack toilets, to spend billions of dollars and, in India's case, lose billions in international aid and loans mainly to boost "national pride," then why would it not make sense for Iran, or Iraq, or Pakistan?

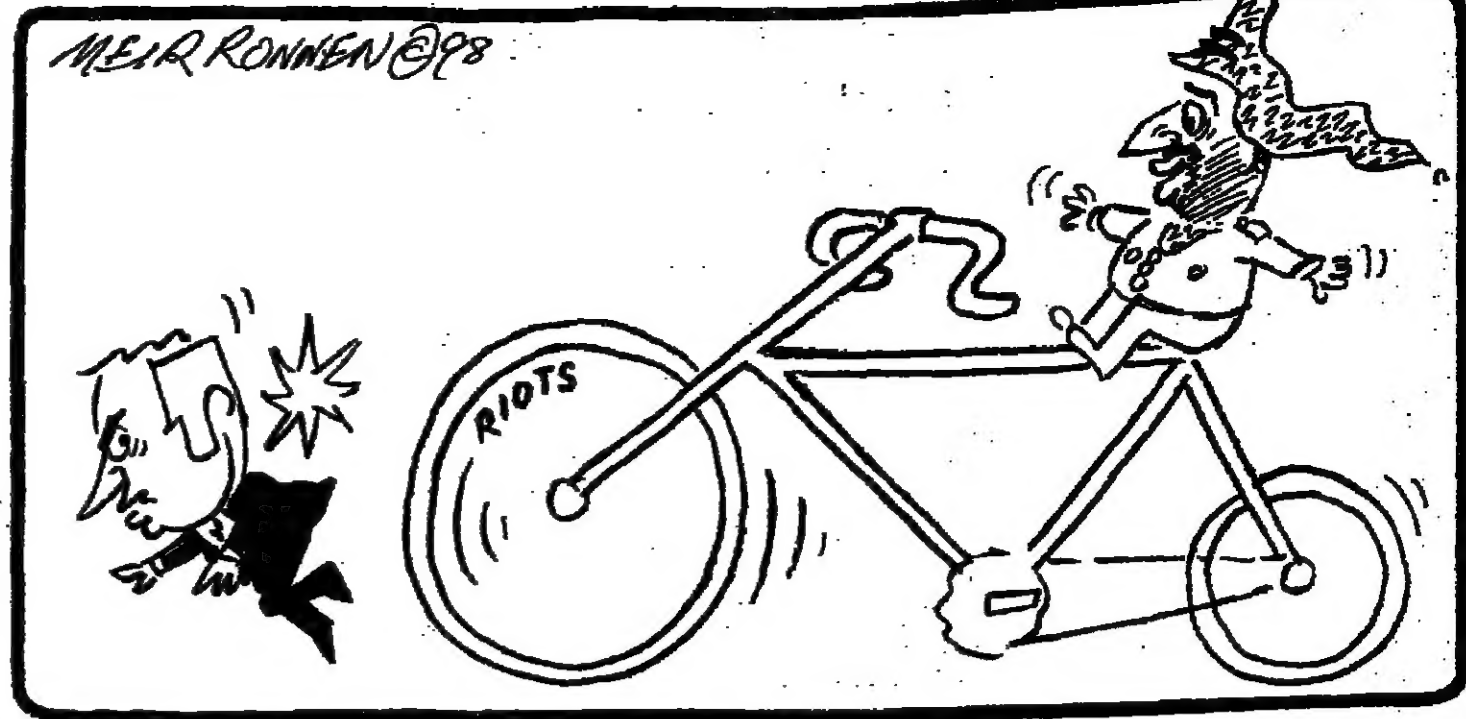
India, which sees itself as a leader on the international stage, has set a terrible example of national priorities for other developing nations.

Unfortunately, the West's only choice is to make India's choice economically painful, both to deter others and to induce India to forswear further tests. The precedents of France and China, which both recently followed highly-criticized nuclear tests with commitments to sign the test ban treaty (which Israel has already signed), indicates India could be convinced to do the same.

In the meantime, the explosions under the Indian desert should serve as a wake-up call to reexamine Western non-proliferation policies. Both China and Russia have flagrantly violated non-proliferation regimes without paying significant consequences. The swift imposition of US sanctions on India is the exception — Clinton himself recently complained about having to "fudge" reality to waive Congressionally mandated sanctions in other cases. And now the US is being followed only limply by Japan and Germany, while Britain has actually come out against economic sanctions.

At the end of the day, the international community must choose the kind of world it wants to live in: a world in which any nation worth its salt must have nuclear weapons, or one in which nuclear arsenals are an obsolete and costly relic of a bygone era. Clearly the clock cannot be turned back technologically, but nations need not always do everything of which they are technologically capable.

To be effective, the nuclear powers must lead the disarmament process by example, and be willing to make minimal economic sacrifices for global security.



A price to pay

ITAMAR RABINOVICH

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's current visit to the United States is taking place under the most unusual circumstances.

He has recently spurned President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright several times in a row. He and his spokesmen have accused Clinton and his administration of exerting pressure on Israel to sacrifice security interests in order to come to an agreement with Yasser Arafat and have mobilized an impressive number of senators and congressmen — House Speaker Newt Gingrich, in particular — to support the Israeli position and to caution Clinton against undermining it.

All this has elicited a surprisingly mild reaction from the administration.

Despite repeated threats to lay an American plan on the table, to have Albright deliver a speech blaming Netanyahu for the collapse of the negotiations or walk away from the peace process, Clinton and his aides have agreed to yet another date or venue and have produced yet another final visit by Dennis Ross.

When Netanyahu failed to meet the terms for the Washington summit planned for last Monday, the meeting was cancelled and replaced with a Netanyahu-Albright meeting later in the week.

This unusual chain of events derives from two very different sources:

(1) Washington's assumption in late 1996, with Israeli and Palestinian encouragement, of a new role in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process — no longer a facilitator but a third participant and a final arbiter. This is how the Hebron Agreement was concluded in January 1997.

One by-product of this development has been a shift in Washington's interests and calculus. For the US it has become important not only to prevent the collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement but also to protect its own credibility and prestige.

A second by-product has been a

to a head-on collision with Netanyahu and his Jewish and conservative Republican friends.

NETANYAHU has demonstrated over the past four months that he can mobilize Gingrich, Rev. Jerry Falwell, and a significant number of senators and congressmen to support him against the administration's policies. Some of them do it after some prodding but others are delighted to assert them-

The present debate with the US is not over an existential issue, it is over the details of one agreement in a long process

change over the past 14 months in the relationship between the three parties to the Hebron Agreement. The fact of the matter is that over time the US and the Palestinians have drifted to one side of the line and Israel to the other with both the US and Arafat accusing Netanyahu of delaying further progress.

The traditional and familiar pattern of close and intimate cooperation between Israel and Washington as the basis of the peace process has been replaced by a perception of US-Palestinian understanding and a growing American-Israeli estrangement.

(2) The second important development since last January has been the weakening of the Clinton presidency by the Lewinsky affair. Under the circumstances the president and his aides have been reluctant to come

selves and their views at the expense of presidential power and prerogative.

Some of this has happened in the past, but not on this scale. There is no precedent for this level of Israeli involvement in US domestic politics.

At this time, it is important to caution Netanyahu not to cross new lines in this confrontation.

The present debate with the United States is not over an existential issue. It is over the details of one agreement in a long process. Nor is it crucial to draw a line in the sand. Israel is not pitted against a hostile administration anxious to push it back in order to honor its Arab friends.

Clinton and his administration have been unusually friendly to and supportive of Israel. Of course, they have a different view of the peace process, and they

now feel that its collapse would jeopardize the stability of the Middle East, undermine US prestige and credibility, and affect its relationship with Arab allies. They are determined to bring the next further redeployment about. Netanyahu, thus, now finds himself locked in a battle of wills with the president of the United States.

It may very well happen that during Netanyahu's visit to the US some compromise formula will be worked out. In fact, Washington's soft touch may be predicated on the expectation that at some point Netanyahu will decide to make the deal.

But this may not come to pass and Netanyahu could be tempted to escalate his pressure on the administration at the AIPAC conference, in his appearances on Capitol Hill, and in his media interviews. This would be a grave mistake.

An Israeli prime minister must not challenge a US president on his home turf. Defeat would be costly, but so would victory. The price may not be exacted immediately, but there would be a price in the long term.

Netanyahu has done well until now in bringing Palestinian demands and expectations down. In the process of so doing, he has strained Israel's relationship with Washington to a dangerous point. Should he fail to come to an agreement with Albright this week, he should avoid a further exacerbation of tension with the US.

The writer, from Tel Aviv University's Dayan Center, is a former ambassador to the US.

No diktat, no confrontation

MOSHE ZAK

Benjamin Netanyahu didn't report to the White House this Monday with a positive response to the American plan, as he had been told to do. He arrived on Wednesday for talks with Madeleine Albright. Throughout the week he has repeatedly stated that Israel will not accept terms dictated by Washington on issues related to its security.

This isn't the first time that an Israeli prime minister has spoken out forcefully in public against an American diktat. Nor is it the first time the US has demanded that Israel pull back its army.

Israel's reaction wasn't always caustic. Even when the American request was painful, Israel did its best not to go too far and to avoid a direct confrontation with the US.

This is what happened in 1948, when the IDF penetrated into eastern Sinai; again in 1956, when the IDF approached the Suez Canal; in 1973, after the IDF had encircled the Egyptian Third Army; and again in the Litani operation in Lebanon in 1978.

In every case where there were serious military considerations at stake Israel did not defy the US. But when the US phrased its request offensively, in the form of an ultimatum, Israel responded forcibly.

1) On January 3, 1961, US ambassador Ogden Reid brought David Ben-Gurion a note from the American administration requiring Israel to reply by midnight to five questions about the Dimona nuclear reactor. Ben-Gurion was offended by the request, which was phrased in the form of a diktat. He didn't reply to the Americans by the deadline they had set, and only the next day summoned the ambassador and answered his questions. Afterwards he added angrily, as he wrote in his diary: "We won't be America's satellite. You should

address us as equals, or not at all."

2) In December 1975 Yitzhak Rabin refused to accept a letter from US ambassador Malcolm Toon, in which president Gerald Ford demanded that Israel's cabinet immediately make a decision on the Sabastia settlement. Even though Rabin opposed the settlement, he couldn't accept this direct diktat to Israel's cabinet. The demand was too crude for him.

support in his government for a more extensive withdrawal in Judea and Samaria hints at the possibility that the US has carefully considered the internal implications of Israel's agreeing to the American plan. It's possible that someone in the administration has considered the model of an American plan that will cause a shake-up in the cabinet, as happened in 1970 and 1990. On both occasions a national unity

government broke up.

The "Rogers questions" presented to Golda Meir as conditions for a cease-fire in 1970, to which Israel could only reply yes, led to the Likud's withdrawal from the coalition, and the "Baker questions" to Yitzhak Shamir concerning meeting Palestinian representatives in Cairo led to the Labor Party's withdrawal from the coalition.

Now the "Albright questions" have been presented without an alternative. Now, after Netanyahu rejected the ultimatum, he has no guarantee that he will not have more coalition difficulties that are liable to cause early elections.

But all those concerned by these diplomatic maneuvers have not paid enough attention to the fact that the Oslo Accords have, in practice, been annulled by Yasser Arafat.

His refusal to conduct direct negotiations with Israel; his reliance on American pressure on Israel; and above all his unambiguous statement that he will declare the Palestinian state on May 4, 1999 without any negotiations with Israel have totally wiped out the

basis on which the Oslo Accords rest — direct negotiations to settle differences.

Even though the Americans have tried to reassure us by inserting a clause in their plan against unilateral steps before the agreement on the permanent settlement, the Palestinians are liable to interpret this as directed against Israeli building in Jerusalem, and not against Palestinian unilateral acts.

If the Palestinians intended to come to the negotiating table on the permanent settlement in good faith, they wouldn't be concerned today with the second and third stages of the withdrawal. But they need larger territory as a wider basis for the establishment of the Palestinian state without Israel's agreement. Israel doesn't have to help them.

Israel is interested in negotiations with the Palestinian Authority in order to fix its permanent borders with the PA. If Israel abandons the bargaining cards it holds, it will be endangering the negotiations toward a permanent settlement. Theoretically, conceding territory appeases the Palestinians and prevents the outbreak of violence, but in practice the opposite is true: It makes the negotiations more difficult.

The negotiations between Israel and the PA have made no progress in the last year, because the Palestinians were hoping that President Clinton would be freer to pressure Israel in his second term. But when they were on the brink of despair, the new American plan caught their eye and they refused to conduct negotiations with Israel. Israel's refusal to come to the White House with its tail between its legs upset their calculations.

The hoped-for negotiations for peace call for a little more patience from both sides, without being dazzled by makeshift solutions not stemming from direct negotiations.

ALBRIGHT's statement that she knows that Netanyahu can muster

FOR the sake of permanent peace, Israel should not abandon its territorial cards

Rabin simply refused to accept the note, and Washington understood its mistake.

3) In December 1981, US ambassador Sam Lewis delivered a note from president Ronald Reagan to Menachem Begin demanding the immediate repeal of the law annexing the Golan Heights to Israel and announcing that until it was repealed, the US would postpone the strategic cooperation agreement. The ultimatum-like terminology infuriated Begin, and he replied sharply: If you suspend the agreement, we will understand that it has been annulled. And I want you to know that Israel isn't America's vassal, and isn't a banana republic. The Knesset will not accept a diktat from outside.

In these three cases a sharp response from Israel didn't damage relations between Jerusalem and Washington. Even the strategic cooperation memorandum of agreement, which by then had only been initiated, was rewritten and signed at a public ceremony.

ALBRIGHT's statement that she knows that Netanyahu can muster

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POOR MODEL

Sir, — What is worrisome about Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai's appointment of Shaul Mofaz over Matan Vilnai for the post of chief of general staff is how it will affect the junior echelon of officers and other young people who would be ready to make a career in the military.

Now, a young lieutenant or major could logically deduce that the way to the top spots in the IDF would not be by merit but by how he or she gets along with the officer who makes the appointments. An obviously bad way to retain the quality of the service.

If there is one institution in this country where merit and integrity cannot be replaced by pettiness it is in the security services.

In this respect the leadership has been a bad model. David Ben-Gurion, who warned constantly against the "Levantineization" of the country, must be turning over in his grave.

MOSHE LEVIN

Jerusalem.

RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT

Sir, — Dana International won, not only for herself, but for all Jews who for 2,000 years have suffered dangers and insults and inequities for the right to be different.

Thank-you Dana.

SYDELLE LEVY

Herzliya Pituah.

BLUE AND WHITE

Sir, — The European Union has declared victory for extremist elements in the Israeli and American Jewish Left by calling for a boycott of products coming from post-1967 areas of the State of Israel, including parts of Jerusalem. (Apparently, they have already decided the outcome of Israeli-PLO final-status talks.) This European expression of noblesse oblige calls for a response in kind.

Israelis should reciprocate by boycotting European products —

RESPECT FOR RABBIS

Sir, — Yosef Goell sinks to an abysmal ignorance, translucent self-hatred and a frighteningly despotic attitude to religion. After reading his article "The secular choice" (May 4), how clear and civic is the prophets' heartrending cry "...those who destroy you and those who lay you waste shall go forth from you." (Isaiah, 49:17).

In his unbelievably outrageous article, he refers to Rabbi Ovadia Yosef as a "foul-mouthed, primitive clown." Goell is not satisfied by bestowing this horrendous appellation, but repeats it a second time.

Woe is to the ears that hear these words; woe is to the eyes that read them.

This is the essence of self-hatred which guides Goell and his ilk. They simply reject every vestige of respect for rabbis and wherever and whenever they can, they bash them at will.

RABBI ABRAHAM CHILL

Jerusalem.

including tulips from Holland, home videos, films, artists and troupes appearing here in upcoming festivals, European vacations and European foreign workers, legal or illegal.

Our motto: Buy and employ Blue and White!

AVRAHAM YAIR GROFF

Jerusalem

CHANNEL SURFING

Sir, — I always enjoy reading Calev Ben-David's television reviews (Channel Surfing).

However, I must say last week's review on the *Jubilee Belts* (May 8), was hilarious and the funniest thing I have read in a long time.

I agree with Ben-David, the *Jubilee Belts* was kitsch, kitsch and more kitsch!

The trumpet introductions were more fitting for the opera *Aida*. Or are these preparations for the as yet undeclared "royal family."

I think all this fanfare is unnecessary and is not in keeping with the average Israeli who, anyway, refuses to wear a tie.

RAHEL SHRAGA

Oranit.

WEATHER MAP

Sir, — I very much like the new weather format; it is now large, colorful, and includes a forecast for a few days, as well as maps of the US and Europe.

Thanks for the improvement.

FRIEDA E. ROSEMAN

Jerusalem.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On May 15, 1933, *The Palestine Post* reported that a contract had been signed to bring an extra 70,000 gallons of water to Jerusalem in addition to the 170,000 gallons obtained from Wadi Kelt. Machinery for pumping water to the Capital was expected to be installed at Ein

Fara and Wadi Kelt but doubts were expressed as to whether the additional supply would improve the situation in view of the fact that Solomon's Pools were already dry and private cisterns were empty.

25 years ago: On May 15, 1973, *The Jerusalem Post* reported

ed that finance minister Pinhas Sapir hoped to collect \$1,000 million by 1978 for his special fund of charitable donations for projects in Israel. Since the campaign started three years earlier \$285m. had been pledged, but only \$100m. collected.

Alexander Zvielli

POSTSCRIPT

FOR THE second year in a row, a rowdy crowd confronted police in Athens, Ohio, as bars closed early for the switch to daylight savings time.

An estimated 2,000 people gathered outside downtown bars that cater to Ohio University stu-

dents before the bars started closing at 2 a.m., half an hour earlier than usual because of the time change.

Police dressed in riot gear fired rubber and wooden projectiles into the crowd when people started throwing bottles, chunks of

pavement and coins. No civilians reported injuries.

Police eventually dispersed the crowd with batons.

Five officers suffered minor injuries and at least 30 people were arrested.

One was arrested at the same time

change sent about 1,000 people into the streets. Forty-seven people were arrested, 34 of them students.

One person was charged with punching a police horse, considered the same as assaulting an

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Leadership: More than just being right

MARK A. HELLER

For those who were wondering how long it would take Arab commentators to use the near-universal indignation over India's nuclear tests to indict Israel, the answer is: one day. Immediately after the announcement of the first Indian tests, an Internet site devoted to Middle Eastern security and arms control asked its members to comment on the effect of this development on the Middle East. The first response was from a contributor in Saudi Arabia, who wrote the following:

Jacques Chirac as president, France conducted a series of nuclear tests in the South Pacific that provoked widespread condemnation. France cannot now join in the chorus of denunciation without appearing more hypocritical than good taste permits. This fear does not bother the other declared nuclear powers. One of these also conducted underground tests in recent years. The others have no discernible security threats that would justify the retention of their nuclear arsenal.

It is a serious question whether India's graduation to the ranks of declared nuclear powers is worth the cost of world-wide opprobrium

"Perhaps it is about time that non-signatory countries of NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] and the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] like India, Pakistan, and Israel must come to realize that they are pushing the whole region into a period of instability and turmoil." Ignore the factual inaccuracy (Israel has signed the CTBT). The main point is to lump Israel in with two South Asian states and blame the three of them for the unhappy state of the Middle East. The message of our Saudi friend is that if only these three would sign—as Iraq did—there would be no problem of nuclear weapons, or other weapons of mass destruction, and no instability and turmoil. He's not the only one who is somewhat unfocused. In the torrent of criticism that has greeted the Indian tests, France has been conspicuously quiet. The reason is obvious. A couple of years ago, immediately after the election of

What they do have, however, is recognized status as "weapon states," i.e. states that had tested nuclear weapons before the signing of the NPT in 1968. India is paying a heavier price for testing a nuclear weapon after 1968 than did France or China because it is a "non-weapon state," i.e. it did not test a weapon before 1968.

THIS may seem like an arbitrary and unfair distinction—and the Indians have always thought and said so—but it is also a fact of international political life as well as American law, the very law on which Bill Clinton relies to explain the imposition of economic sanctions by the United States. There is therefore a serious question as to whether India's graduation to the ranks of declared nuclear powers is worth the cost of world-wide opprobrium, economic penalties, and the tit-for-tat actions that its neighbors are likely to take. Unless it, too, deploys a

nuclear arsenal, Pakistan is not a major danger to India. Indeed, the Pakistanis are rather offended when Indian analysts practically ignore them in their assessments of strategic threats to Indian security. If there is a real strategic concern, it is China. But even before these tests, it was widely suspected that India was capable of assembling nuclear weapons. The only practical result of the tests is that they have made explicit what was previously ambiguous, so that India's neighbors, including China, now know what they only assumed before. At worst, this will impel them to build up their own capabilities. At

best, it will only marginally enhance India's deterrent and contribute to its security. In quantitative terms, the margin may well be something in the neighborhood of 2 percent-4 percent. This suggests that the primary consideration was domestic politics—a right-wing government trying to score cheap points by pandering to nationalist public opinion. Nobody disputes India's right, after 50 years of independence, to define its own security needs and act accordingly. But leadership is not just about being right; it is also about properly appreciating the consequences of various actions

and non-actions. Pakistan has already argued that it has a similar right to define its security needs and will resist attempts by foreigners (i.e. Americans) to tell it how to respond. And American goodwill, however much or little that is worth, has clearly been squandered. In short, a highly dubious policy, justified on unexplained security grounds, will probably cause a net loss to Indian security. This may not mean, as some Pakistanis have charged, that India's leaders have gone berserk. But it does raise serious questions about their fitness to lead.

For this we yearned?

No matter how alienated from his religion, it was a rare Eastern European Jew who would ever publicly repudiate his religion in front of gentiles. Our history is replete with stories of those who passed all their lives as non-Jews and yet, when the Jews of their town were rounded up for the slaughter, stepped forward to declare that they too were Jewish. Today we who so pride ourselves on our independence abase ourselves in front of the rest of the world. We publicly spit on the religion of our fathers and gleefully declare our contempt. Homosexual activists boast on TV, "We are the generation of the flood," the generation that broke all barriers of perversity. In our first military confrontation, shortly after the exodus from Egypt, Amalek, the arch-enemy of the Jewish people, the supreme denier of God in history, cut off the sign of the covenant of Abraham from slain Jews and flung it toward heaven as proof that there is no covenant and no God.

Today Amalek is within, and it is Jews themselves who proclaim to the world that we have put behind us the old superstitious religion. They declare that all barriers to unbridled freedom have fallen. The nation has lost its head. Yossi Sarid and Yitzhak Levy join hands in celebrating Dana International's victory and the honor it has brought to Israel and Israeli song. Levy, stung by the suggestion, after the Batsheva Dance Troupe fiasco, that a rabbi can't be with-it enough, progressive enough, to serve as minister of culture, hurries to show how hip he is, how unfazed by transvestites and transsexuals. He still dreams of currying secular favor by distancing himself from the haredim, and imagines that the new paganism is not as contemptuous of his kind as of the haredim. And thus does the leader of the party of Land of Israel worship celebrate the descent into abomination in a land that spits out abomination. Rather than being buoyed by the

JONATHAN ROSENBLUM

affection of Europe, we should ask ourselves precisely what honor has been conferred upon us and why. Consciously or uncon-

We have declared ourselves pagans, celebrants of any form of sexual license and chic adrogyny

sciously, Europeans honor us for having refuted Jewish claims of moral superiority and chosenness. CHRISTIAN and pagan anti-semitism have always hated the Jew as bearer of God's moral message to humanity: Christians because they believe themselves to have supplanted Jews as God's chosen; pagans because they despise morality. Church-sanctioned pogroms and the civic

degradation of Jews throughout the ages were designed to demonstrate to us that we had lost divine favor. Our continued existence and obstinate retention of our faith in the face of such proofs, only testified in the eyes of the gentile world to our exceptional perverseness. Nietzsche recognized the Jews as the source of morality, and condemned us for having drained the pagan world of its Dionysian power. Hitler, the arch pagan, followed Nietzsche. He ranted that the Jews had inflicted two wounds on the world: mercy for the down-trodden and circumcision. Nazi propaganda films portrayed Jews as a horde of rats transformed into hasidim. Hitler's Jew hatred was synonymous with hatred of a religion that charged its adherents to be holy because "I, the Lord, your God, am holy." Today, however, neither pagans nor Christians need trouble themselves any longer with the Jews. We have declared ourselves pagans, celebrants of any form of sexual license and chic adrogyny; we have turned those among us

who continue to believe in God into objects of scorn and ridicule. Once antisemites portrayed us as sexual libertines and perverts to undermine our moral authority. Today we cheerfully admit the charge and imagine ourselves beloved by the world for it. Are we and our culture similarly honored when a CNN documentary claims that we have the highest rate of prostitution in the world? Is it homage that *Newsweek* offers in photographs depicting well-heeled matrons watching male strippers in posh north Tel Aviv living rooms? Will the prostitutes and strippers also be invited to perform in the Knesset for having brought us favor in the eyes of the nations? For 2,000 years, Jews prayed to return to this land. For what? So that we could fill it with every rite practiced by the pagans who inhabited it before us? So that we could express our hatred of God as loudly as possible and pat ourselves on the back that the nations have noticed? Is this the new definition Israel has given to Jewish pride?

Middle Israel
AMOTZ ASA-EL

Revenge of the Kurds

By the mid-1960s, well-to-do Jerusalem was prosperous enough to breed a growing army of maids, nannies, and au pairs; like Miriam Zaken, who used to climb her way for some 30 minutes from thickly blue-collar Rehov Ben-Zakkai in the Katamonim to our neck of the woods between Old Katamon and Talbiyah, one house to the left of prime minister Levi Eshkol's official residence and two to the right of the Zambian Embassy cottage, rented from Ben Zion and Tzila Netanyahu.

Shortish and ever-smiling, Miriam accompanied much of our childhood, happily—or so she seemed—ironing our laundry, washing our windows, scrubbing our floors, and diversifying my hopelessly Ashkenazi mother's unmistakably Hungarian cuisine of lechko, goulash, and bundash with such Kurdish delights as kubeh, yaprak, and ma'amul.

It was, in short, an officially egalitarian Israel's benign version of Britain's upstairs-downstairs encounters between haves and have-nots. So innocent, intimate, and durable was this acquaintance that when I got married, Miriam sighed, said "finally," wiped a tear, and gave me a Shabbat candleabra, her tacit way of hinting broadly that now was the time to once and for all straighten out my turbulent relationship with God. Since then, of course, with a succession of arguably less affable, but clearly more affordable, Palestinians, Filipinas, and Thais taking over, Israel's domestic-help industry has changed beyond recognition.

So have the Kurds.

THOUGH they lacked the affluence, education, and cosmopolitanism of their Baghdad or Halabi "neighbors," this rural tribe tended to shun the various militantly anti-Ashkenazi movements which gathered momentum in the 1970s, and were mainly led by Moroccan-born Israelis. Most Kurdish Israelis, like Miriam, focused on getting by, in the spirit of the now-politically incorrect *ana-Kurdi* phrase, which meant "I don't get it," and implied the stereotype of a hard-working but unsophisticated yokel.

In recent years, to be sure, much of this has been so dramatically transformed that Kurdish Israelis have become everything and anything, from tri-continental property developers like Mordechai Yona to army generals like former chief of general staff Moshe Levy. Still, judging by Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai's handling of the CGS appointment, there apparently are Kurdish Israelis who resent the sight of hordes of Miriam Zakens servicing Ashkenazi Israel. For them, an opportunity to dispossess someone as princely as Mazan Vilna'i, and anoint in his stead someone as humble as Iranian-born Shaul Mofaz, must be seen as a precious chance to do some long-overdue poetic justice.

Career paths like Mordechai's and Mofaz's were, after all, marred by an acute lack of the connections, lineage, and privilege of the sort with which well-born military boarding school graduates like Vilna'i or Amnon

Lipkin-Shahak were abundantly endowed.

Mordechai will surely never forget how an Ashkenazi-led General Security Service tried to frame him with an unfounded manslaughter allegation during the Bus 300 Affair. And Mofaz must have wondered whether his rocky admission-process into the Officer Candidate School wouldn't have been smoother had his father not been a small-time merchant in Eilat but a prominent politician in Jerusalem, like Eliahu Meridor, Yitzhak Rabin, Haim Landau or Shimon Peres, whose sons Dan, Yuval, Uzi, and Chemi all easily entered officer training; or at least a geographer like Vilna'i's father, Ze'ev, whose books on Jerusalem were for decades the most popular bar mitzva present in the capital.

AND YET, touching as all this is, the thinking behind Mordechai's choice is downright wrong; not only because hidden agendas, ulterior motives, and personal vendettas must be set aside when an appointment as pivotal as the chief of general staff is at stake, but because defense ministers should not be retired generals in the first place.

The very explanation Mordechai gave for preferring Mofaz—"I must choose someone with whom I can work"—reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the relationship between a CGS and his minister of defense. In Mordechai's view, the former is the latter's underling, with the minister being a sort of super-CGS, much like what Moshe Dayan ended up being for David Elazar.

In reality, Israel's best ministers of defense were civilians, most notably David Ben-Gurion, a retired Ottoman sergeant who laid the IDF's foundations; Levi Eshkol, a Yiddish-joking *zeidi* who built the army which won the Six-Day War; and Shimon Peres, the clean-shaven bookworm who rebuilt the IDF after its '73 trauma. Conversely, our worst ministers of defense were retired generals: Moshe Dayan and Ariel Sharon, whose military "expertise" led us into the Yom Kippur and Lebanon disasters. Similarly, former deputy CGS Ezer Weizman as minister of defense made the dubious choice of Rafael Eitan as CGS, while Sgt. (Res.) Moshe Arens made the successful choice of Moshe Levy.

The US and Britain never place generals at the defense establishment's helm; they must know why. In this country, it is for some reason taken for granted that generals are eligible for this position; they are not, and Mordechai's latest acrobatics are proof of that. The very fact that he has 30-year acquaintances with the two candidates—never mind that one was a close buddy, the other a bitter nemesis—was wrong. A minister of defense should be socially and emotionally aloof from the military elite. That way he ends up distant from the army's day-to-day squabbling, and focuses on inspiring strategic orientation.

Now we must assume that Mordechai preferred thinking of himself rather than of us; so unsoldierly, so uncollegial, so unlike Miriam Zaken.

AACI 31st NATIONAL CONVENTION
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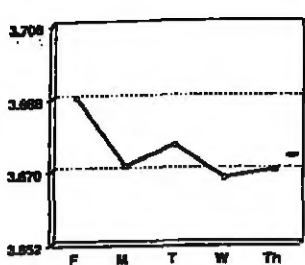
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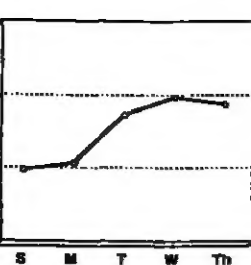
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in brief

DOLLAR / SHEKEL

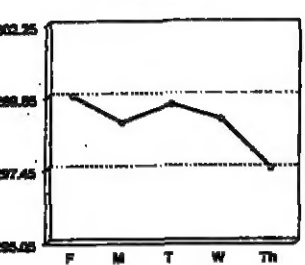


MAOF INDEX



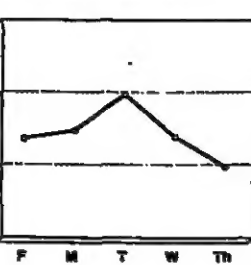
GOLD

\$ per ounce

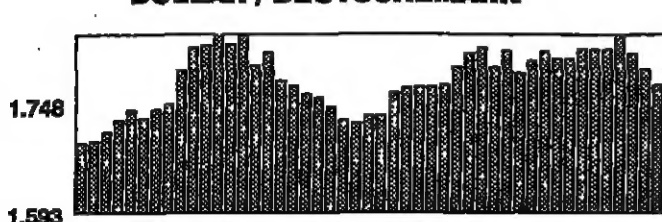


OIL

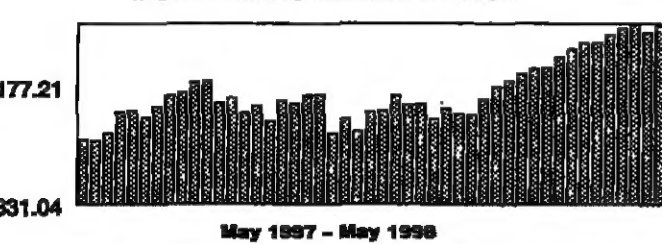
\$ per barrel of Brent crude



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BITS & BYTES

Security-7 signs European sales deal

Security-7 has signed a distribution agreement for the entire European market with Integrals, the largest distributor of information security products in Europe. The marketing efforts will be mostly focused on Germany, France and the UK.

The 18-month-old start-up, based in Yokne'am, produces the SafeGate security suite to protect organizational network systems from hostile applications from unauthorized Java, ActiveX or other downloadable via connections from the Internet.

The company said its product was chosen by Integrals after it tested other competing products, including those from Israeli companies. The system was installed two weeks ago in some organizations in the UK, in sales valued at tens of thousands of dollars.

Sharansky to attend TechVentures

Industry and Trade Minister Nathan Sharansky is to take part in the upcoming TechVentures Israeli high-tech conference in Santa Clara, California, as part of the effort to boost investment in the high-tech sector.

On May 27-28, some 130 Israeli high-tech companies will gather there to display their products and hold meetings with potential investors, including venture capitalists, and strategic partners.

Sharansky is to hold meetings with several top American businessmen and speak to the gathering, as will California Governor Pete Wilson.

Check Point, Microsoft expand cooperation

Check Point Software Technologies and Microsoft announced the expansion this week of their strategic partnership to integrate Check Point's products in networks running on Microsoft Windows NT. The companies hope the move will boost use of Windows NT as the platform for enterprise security.

The companies will also work to ensure the integration of security components from each company and to extend Check Point's framework to additional Microsoft products.

The Ramat Gan based Check Point is the maker of security and traffic management network solutions, Firewall-1 and FloodGate-1.

100 foreign analysts to attend economic conference

By DAN GERSTENFELD

One hundred foreign analysts representing some of the world's leading investment institutions are to attend a special conference on economic opportunities in Israel, opening Sunday in Tel Aviv.

The "Economic Prospects into the Next Century" conference organizers, Euromoney Publications, said they chose to schedule the event to coincide with the jubilee celebration.

Senior Israeli officials and prominent business leaders will present opportunities for foreign investments in Israel.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman and Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel will also attend the event.

The investment houses sending representatives to the meeting include Merrill Lynch, Lehman Brothers, Salomon Smith Barney, Chase Securities, Goldman Sachs & Co., Morgan Stanley & Co., Robert Fleming, SBC Warburg Dillon Read, Standard & Poor's, Sumitomo Bank, Fuji Bank, Bear

Stearns and other visitors from the US, Britain, France, Japan, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Romania.

The event sponsors - Israel Discount Bank, AIG, the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and the Association of TASE-Listed Companies - expect the event to encourage further investments here and improve Israel's position in the world equity markets.

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EU trade conditions hinge on Israel-PA agreement

By DAVID HARRIS

The European Union is prepared to offer favorable trade conditions for goods produced jointly by Israel and its neighbors, but only once the issue of borders with the Palestinian areas is finalized, European officials said yesterday.

"As a first step, the commission will take the initiative to meet with officials representing Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the West Bank and Gaza to put forward the appropriate proposals to the rules of origin," read a paper submitted by the commission to the European Council of Ministers.

This came a day after Brussels blasted Israel for its treatment of Palestinians, their produce, and for alleged breaches of trade agreements with Europe.

Jerusalem expressed dismay at a document which accused Israel of imposing "draconian restrictions... at all times" on the entry and exit of people and goods to and from Gaza and occasionally to the "West Bank Palestinian-held areas."

The principal cause for concern, according to the EU paper, is Israel's exporting produce from the territories, east Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights "as if originating in Israel," in the case of the latter two "since these territories do not form part of the State of Israel under public international law."

While the documentation falls short of call

for a boycott of such produce, it does ask that "such violations of the rules of origin should be brought to an end."

One of the reasons Israel is likely to use "Made in Israel" labeling for goods from the territories is that products jointly made in Europe and Israel currently receive favorable trade status, while items produced between Israel and third countries in the region are not eligible for beneficial treatment.

Israeli industrialists, lead by the Manufacturer's Association, are eager for a formal cumulation agreement, allowing goods jointly produced in Israel and the territories to be considered for favorable status. The organization said the latest move from Europe was using an "economic tool in a political argument."

The European paper refers to a variety of alleged breaches of the EC-Israel Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters.

Palestinians products, particularly pickles and fruit juices, are exported by Israeli agents who add "Made in Israel" labels, despite the fact that the production and packaging is completed in the territories.

Israeli shoe, leather, and clothing companies import textiles from Europe, with Palestinian firms then processing the materials. In accordance with cumulation agreements, Europe maintains the resulting products should then be exported as of Palestinian

origin, however, this is not the case.

Israelis often refuse to grant import licenses, particularly where the goods are destined for completion of production by Palestinians, for example paints and pharmaceuticals. "In order to fulfill the terms of his deal, the Palestinian producer who has difficulties obtaining a license agrees to import the products without a license and to pay a 5 percent fine."

Customs and VAT Authority deputy director David Shimoni yesterday declined to comment on the issues at hand until he had fully studied the details.

The Foreign Ministry refused to comment further than a brief printed statement, which condemned the Brussels communiqué as "a blatant infringement [of] the Paris agreements between [Israel] and the Palestinian Authority," which established the notion of a single customs envelope including Israel and the territories.

However, the commission wrote: "Even if Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip de facto apply similar import regimes, a legal interpretation of the Paris Protocol leads to the conclusion that the West Bank and Gaza Strip constitutes a separate customs territory, since the Palestinians can and do exercise their own trade regime."

British Trade Minister Lord Clinton-Davis yesterday said there is still a long way to go before European ministers would consider

taking specific action against Israel.

Liat Collins adds: Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon on an official visit in Strasbourg said the European move is "clearly a politically motivated act," although he stopped short of saying the timing of the move was planned to coincide with the Palestinian "Nakba" day, his visit, or Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's talks in Washington. Talking to Israel Radio, Tichon said that the measures are "sanctions and a boycott, although that's not what they are calling them."

Tichon said he has explained to the Europeans that the main people who will suffer are the Palestinians. "They don't know that on the whole the trade with the Palestinian Authority and Israel is a success story."

He said the figures for 1996 showed trade between Israel and the PA amounted to \$1.5 billion. He said the Palestinians benefit from the trade which is their main source of income.

"It seems to me this decision is shooting from the hip. Nobody examined the effect on Israel's economy, which will be minimal. I know the industries in the territories. What bothers me most is that all the new neighborhoods of Jerusalem are included in the decision - Atarot, Har Habotzva, and Mishor. If it starts in the new neighborhoods where will it end?"



Free at last!

A man buys dollars in Tel Aviv yesterday. Israelis are now able to buy and sell any currency freely after the Bank of Israel yesterday lifted most of the restrictions on currency exchange. The liberalization program means Israelis can now buy property and hold bank accounts overseas.

Purchasing Managers' Index hits all-time low

By DAN GERSTENFELD

The Purchasing Managers' Index for April fell to a seasonally adjusted 45.3 percent, the lowest ever, Dun and Bradstreet and others' Association of Purchasing Managers announced yesterday.

"Without the seasonal adjustment, the index fell to only 42.8%. The index is calculated according to 10 proportionate components. A result above 50% indicates an improvement in performance, while a lower result reflects a decline in performance compared with the previous month."

All of the index components indicate a decline in activity, with productivity, employment, orders, and purchase for inventories falling to their lowest level since the index was first introduced in 1995.

D&B said that the index reflects slowing economic activity and a standstill in the industrial sector. The company added that the index is expected to continue falling in coming months.

International businesses flee Jakarta

By ALEC D.B. MCCABE

JAKARTA (Bloomberg) - Deutsche Bank AG shut its two branches in Indonesia and BankAmerica Corp. and others began moving employees out of the country as riots swept the capital for a third day. Merrill Lynch & Co., ABN Amro NA, and others sent staff home from work early as

thousands of protesters burned shops and cars to demand President Suharto resign after 32 years in power.

"The panic buttons were hit this morning," said John Ellis, a senior vice president at Bank of America, which employs about 500 people in Indonesia.

An increasing number of executives and others say Suharto may

bow to the pressure and resign. Many, though, say they are unsure who will replace him.

The departure of the man who built modern Indonesia and then presided over its economic collapse could create a political vacuum and spark more violence in the world's fourth most populous country. For some foreign companies, that risk is too great. US

European and Japanese banks and brokerage firms employ thousands in Indonesia. (Bloomberg)

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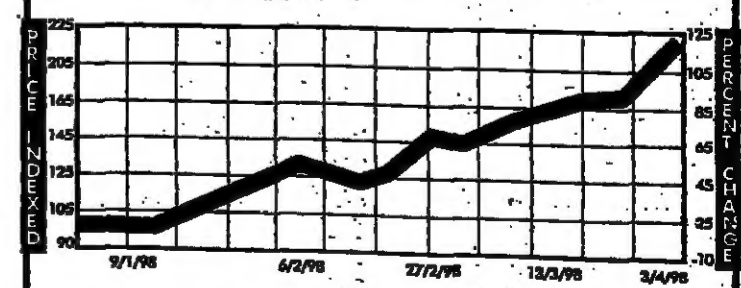
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LAST		CHANGE
FRANKFURT		
Bayer	183.5	+1.15
Daniel-Bahr	70.5	-0.5
Linbausch	73.1	-0.4
Mannmann	73.1	-0.2
Messinghachschel	151.4	-0.4
S&P	78.9	-0.2
V&P	141.8	-0.3
SOURCE: S&P COMMODITIES-11-22-82		
FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES		
	Last	Change
S&I (Baker) (1)	2.16	-0.01
U.S. Dollar (1)	3.67	-0.01
British Pound (1)	2.96	-0.01
Deutsch Mark (1)	2.36	-0.01
Japanese Yen (100)	0.616	-0.01
French Franc (100)	2.76	-0.01
Swiss Franc (100)	2.81	-0.01
Canadian Dollar (1)	0.5315	-0.01
Italian Lira (1000)	2.02	-0.01
European Dinar (1)	0.1564	-0.01
NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES		
	Last	Change
DJ Industrials	5172.25	-39.51
DJ Transport	3452.51	-16.89
DJ Util	271.11	-1.32
DJ Comp	2891.56	-5.98
DJ Energy	46.7	-0.7
NYSE Composite	511.92	-1.14
NYSE Comp	574.21	-0.99
S&P 100	543.19	-0.29
S&P Spot Index	1117.37	-0.49
OTHER MARKET INDEXES		
	Last	Change
FTSE 100	586.55	-0.77
Tokyo Nikkei	1537.6	-36.2
Nippon Keirei-sha Index	349.34	-5.34
Hong Kong Hang Seng Index	3311.3	-12.7
Paris CAC	228.58	-0.78
Paris CAC-40	207.98	-1.74
DAX	783.53	-78.53
Amex	855.04	-6.08
NYSE Market Index	750.6	-2.5
Sydney	279.5	-14.3
Milani	1536.25	-8.77
DOLLAR CROSSRATES (US \$)		
	Last	Change
Pound-sterl (GB£)	1.631	-0.012
Jan. Yukon (C\$)	1.7594	-0.0008
D-Mark-germ	1.8789	-0.0013
Swiss franc (Sfr)	0.5653	-0.0001
Italian-sterl	1.48	-0.0001
Jan. Yukon (C\$)	0.61779	-0.0001
Jan. Yukon (C\$)	0.007562	-1.0E-005
Jan. Yukon (C\$)	1.4473	-0.0001
Jan. Yukon (C\$)	0.9308	-0.0001
Ausdollar (A\$)	0.5253	-0.0012
Jan. Yukon (C\$)	0.5253	-0.0012
French-sterl	1.159	-0.0001
Ausdollar (A\$)	0.0046	-0.0003
Jan. Yukon (C\$)	12.534	-0.0204
Rand-sterl	5.08	-0.0001
ECU-sterl	1.0623	-0.0001
US COMMODITIES		

	Last	Change
Coffee (Lb)	129.8	-3.45
Cocoa (Lb) (CBOT)	264.7	-2.5
Colza Seed (CBOT)	645.5	-2.5
Wheat (Lb) (CBOT)	109.2	-0.06
Wheat (Lb) (CEC)	111.5	-0.65
Wheat (Lb) (CBOT)	119.3	-2.4825
Soybean (Lb)	31.94	-
Beans and Pulse	111.9	-5

LONDON COMMODITIES

	Last	Change
Coffee (Lb)	1150	+6
Cocoa (Lb) (LCE)	264	+107
Colza Seed (Lb) (LCE)	1469	+40

SPOT MARKET METALS (US)

	Last	Change
Silver spot	5.6	-0.05

NEW YORK METAL FUTURES

	Last	Change
Gold (Lb)	290.5	-0.5
Silver (Lb)	45.8	-0.027
Platinum (Lb)	600	-1.9
Palladium (Lb)	271.5	-2.4
High-grade copper (Lb)	170.5	-0.045

LONDON METAL FIXES

	Last	Change
Gold AM fix	292.9	+1.3
Gold PM fix	295.15	+0.2
Silver fix	45.8	+0.0

Month in parentheses signals contract exp. date

Spot market listings are for approximately

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NEWSinFOCUS

The Jerusalem Post Friday, May 15, 1998

13

Pulling back from the precipice

Realizing that last week's perceived ultimatum to Israel by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright might backfire, the administration has spent this week trying to soft-pedal its position, Jewish leaders tell Hillel Kuttler in Washington

APAC director Howard Kohr warned two months ago that the route the administration was charting to break the peace process stalemate would fail and lead to a clash with Israel.

Recent events, he says now, have proved to be "exactly the predictable course." Kohr feared then, when he told a United Jewish Appeal forum that the US's "promulgating a so-called American plan and then using pressure tactics to try to coerce Israel into accepting it" is an oft-tried formula that "has never worked."

"Our number-one message is that pressure does not work, and that the [best] way to achieve progress in the peace process is to work with Israel," says Kohr. "We still believe that working with Israel works, and we need to get back to the basics."

The fraying of American-Israeli understandings on the peace process has brought with it predictable divisions between Jewish groups and the administration, and between Congress and the executive branch.

Those differences reached a head on the eve of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's arrival for what is an Israeli prime minister's annual spring ritual: addressing the American Israel Public Affairs Committee lobbying group.

The visit instead shaped up as one dominated by the diplomatic showdown that climaxed last week, when Secretary of State Madeleine Albright conditioned her invitation to a summit on Israel's acceptance of American terms for a further redeployment in the territories.

Appearances notwithstanding, not everyone agrees that US-Israeli relations are in a crisis — or even that what Albright had said constituted an ultimatum.

Tom Smerling of the left-wing Israel Policy Forum, for instance, pointed out that it was not an ultimatum because no penalty was threatened.

But something resembling a crisis is evident. Many in Congress and among the leadership of Jewish organizations are concerned about the ominous consequences of an ugly fight between Washington and Jerusalem, and about the administration provoking Netanyahu into digging in his heels further, if only to demonstrate that he — and Israel — will not be dictated to.

The crisis of confidence centers on the message the American-Israeli rift reflects back to a region that relishes the clash. It also rests on the precedent this sets — of America seeking to "deliver" Israel. Furthermore, for some, it sets on shaky ground what the late premier

Yitzhak Rabin (and presumably Netanyahu, too) saw as a bedrock of the Oslo process — that heading into final-status negotiations with the Palestinians, Israel must believe that it and Washington are synchronized, and that American support is assured.

"If you're at a bar and say to the person next to you, 'Let's step outside [and fight], you've set something in motion. There are people outside egging you on,'" an AIPAC official said.

SOME JEWISH organizational heads believe that the administration this week recognized it had miscalculated, and stepped back from the precipice. They say this accounts for US President Bill Clinton's deciding Monday that although that day's scheduled White House summit with Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat had been cancelled, he would have Albright meet with Netanyahu in Washington — which they did, on Wednesday, and again yesterday.

The Jewish officials were also calmed somewhat by Albright's invitation to meet with her at the State Department on Tuesday, followed by her speech to the National Press Club, in which she reassured Israel that while the US can't wait forever, the bilateral ties would remain solid regardless of what happens in the peace process.

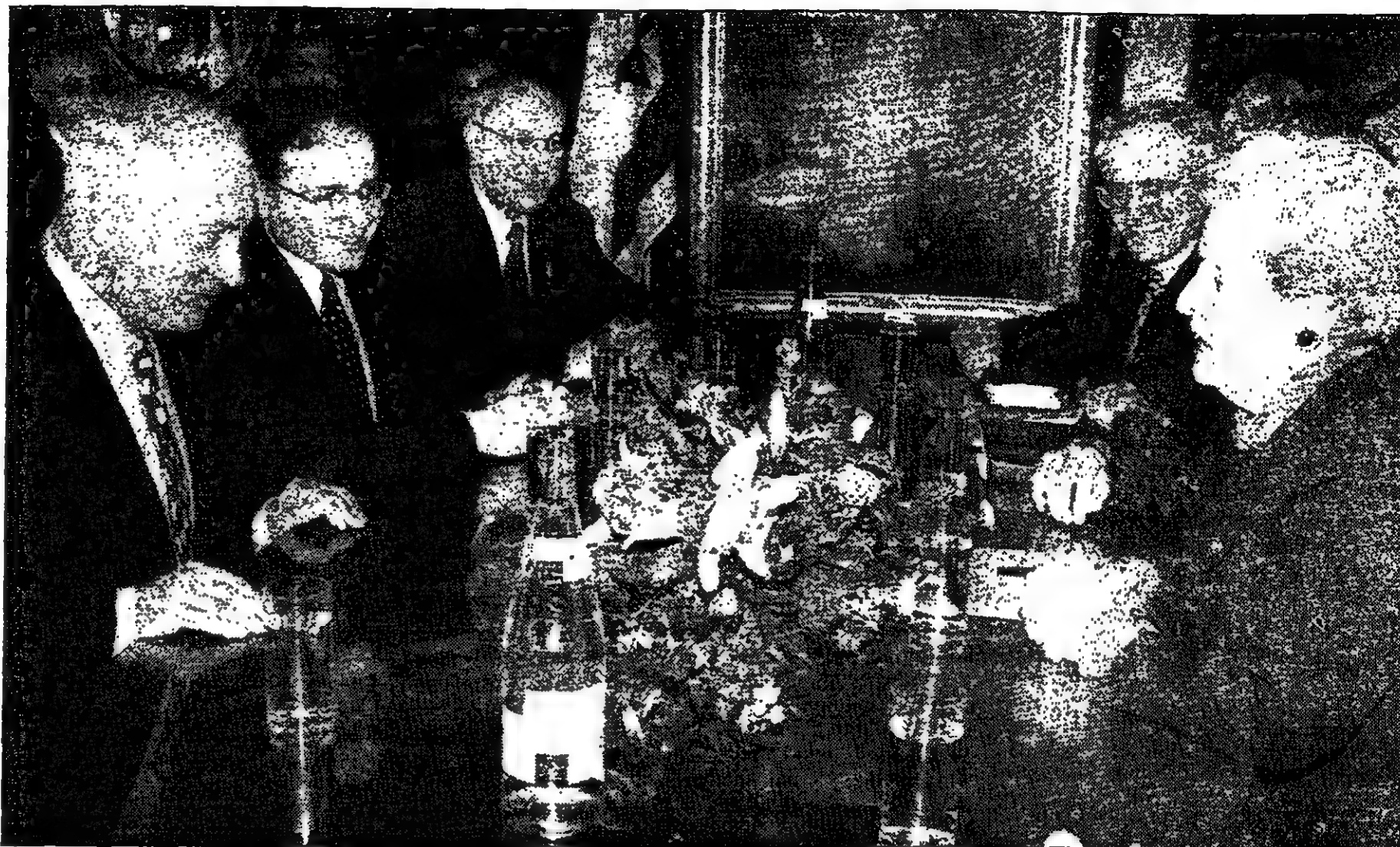
Albright's heading afterwards to Capitol Hill for separate briefings on the peace process with representatives and senators illustrates her sensitivity to Congress's concerns, too.

"I think the fact of [Tuesday's] press conference was as significant as its substance: a) It was on the eve of the arrival of the prime minister, and b) the secretary of state is not in the habit of coming to the press to explain, defend and rationalize American foreign policy," said Anti-Defamation League director Abraham Foxman, who participated in the meeting with Albright.

"I think they were stung by the criticism. I think they felt a need to stand up and respond, which she did.... We are reassured that they heard the message. What [this response] said is, 'We're listening.'"

Foxman said the administration's courting of the Jewish community, and Clinton's decision to hold the Netanyahu-Albright meeting despite Netanyahu's spurning the US's deadline, was a recognition by the administration that it had "stepped over the line."

"It's as much of a rollback as — with dignity and saving face — one can do," Foxman said. "It was a defense and a preemptive strike... so that the prime minister, when



Prime Minister Netanyahu and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and their teams prepare to talk in Washington this week: Is the administration beginning to recognize that pressure doesn't work?

he comes here, has less of a punching bag."

LAST WEEK, House Speaker Newt Gingrich did some boxing of his own, accusing the administration of bullying Israel on Arafat's behalf. Those statements, and other recent letters from members of Congress critical of Clinton, led to accusations by some in the administration that Congress is pandering to American Jewry and engaging in partisanship.

Asked by *The Jerusalem Post* about the inevitable backlash to his comments, Gingrich appeared taken aback.

"Why would you demean the legitimately democratic government of Israel and the legitimately democratic Congress of the US having honest, open positions by suggesting anything except that reasonable people [realize] that since the Oslo agreement... [the Palestinians] haven't done any of the things they're supposed to have done, and yet the Clinton administration continues to be pro-Arafat, continues to prop up the Palestinian position, and has now moved in a public way to deliver a public ultimatum [to Israel]," Gingrich said.

"Now, that is precisely the opposite of what was promised, [which] was that the US would convene meetings at which the two parties would negotiate. Now it's become the Clinton administration and Arafat against Israel. And I would just suggest to you that we were as firm when it was a Labor government in Israel as we are when it's a Likud government...."

"I think we are taking a legitimate position, not on behalf of Netanyahu any more than earlier, when I worked closely with prime minister Rabin, or before that when we worked with the previous Likud government. Our position is one of trying to work with the freely elected government of Israel."

In a month marked by a series of Congressional letters to Clinton — highlighted by one signed by 81 Senators urging him not to pressure Israel by going public with an American plan for breaking the deadlock — Gingrich's letter was the most abrasive.

In an interview Wednesday, Democratic Sen. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota called Gingrich's statements "a demagogic accusation" and said he doesn't consider Albright's conditions for the summit an ultimatum.

"In the Bush administration there was the threat to cut off [funds for the \$10 billion loan guarantees]," said Wellstone. "I don't see any such threat."

"Part of the role of a mediator is you lay out ideas. The parties make the decisions whether to accept it."

According to Sen. Bob Kerrey, a Nebraska Democrat who attended Albright's closed briefing for an audience he described as half the Senate, talk of a rift between the two countries is "exaggerated."

"Any time a friend tries to help a

friend finish a conflict, it's not easy to do," Kerrey said.

"Although [special Middle East coordinator] Dennis Ross and Madeleine Albright have attempted to play the role of honest broker, now we're forced to defend ourselves that we didn't lay an ultimatum on the table."

"I don't think it's an ultimatum. What I take it as is that our effort to intervene hasn't yet succeeded, and may yet fail."

Kerrey said that in signing onto the letter last month, "I didn't intend to be critical of the administration's efforts. I just don't think we should break neutrality [and] I don't think this administration has done that."

ON THE other hand, Rep. Howard Berman, a California Democrat, said he had initially refrained from signing the House's letter to Clinton when it was circulated last month, but changed his mind last week after Albright's statements setting the terms for the Washington summit.

"It was only the events of London that had me sign the letter. It was the public pinpointing of our close ally for not accepting something that we'd previously said was their decision to make," Berman said, of the disagreement over the extent of Israel's redeployment.

"Not that I don't want to see it

move forward; not that I'm opposed to pressure. But the fear was it wouldn't get the result intended. And, second, that it could leave in its wake the impression that Israel was at fault, all the evidence of noncompliance on the other side notwithstanding."

Late last week, Berman spoke with Vice President Al Gore and sensed that the administration was "backing away" from its tough line while not abandoning the peace process.

"What I thought was an ultimatum turned out not to be," Berman added. "I think the president is a great friend of Israel. I want this government of Israel to abide by the Oslo accords. [But] I didn't like that particular tactic — the appearance of a public ultimatum being given to one side."

Wellstone said that Albright was received respectfully at Tuesday's briefing, although senators expressed their concerns about the pressure she brought to bear on Israel.

Albright repeated "over and over again" that Washington's intention was not to coerce Israel but to break the peace process stalemate, Wellstone said, adding that Albright also reiterated that the US commitment to Israel "will always be there."

What is certain to remain consistent is Capitol Hill's support

for Israel, particularly that of a Republican Congress for a free-market Likud premier. A prime minister's visit to both houses may be perfunctory and smart politics, but they could not have been better timed than Netanyahu's half-day visit scheduled for yesterday.

ON THE most serious breach between the two countries since the advent of the peace process, a senior administration official said the topic is too sensitive to comment on, that "there have been too many quotes from so-called senior administration officials" on the subject.

He was less reserved, however, when addressing Congress's opposition to the administration's policies now.

"It shouldn't be a partisan issue manipulated for partisan reasons," the official said. "Domestic politics shouldn't enter into an issue such as this."

Asked whether Congress's letters and rhetoric attacking Clinton make the peace team's lives more difficult, the official said: "It doesn't make them easier."

"We're crossing the line between things that have nothing to do with foreign affairs and even less to do with Israel — and everything to do with domestic politics."

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The haredim bite their tongues

Following three tough weeks and facing a possible secular backlash, the religious parties may slowly be changing their tactics, if not their policies.
Herb Keinon reports

Within 10 hours of Dana International's victory in the Eurovision Song Contest late Saturday night, Israel Radio talk show host Shelly Yehimovich had United Torah Judaism MK Moshe Gafni on the line. In a voice dripping with sarcasm she asked if he wanted to congratulate the transsexual singer.

The script seemed well worn: Yehimovich asks a provocative question; Gafni responds with a tirade that then becomes a featured item on the news for the next half a day.

But this time Gafni, rather uncharacteristically, held back, presaging what may very well be a fundamental change in haredi tactics — verbal restraint.

It's been a tough few weeks for the country's religious parties. They have been pillaged by the press over the Batsheva Dance Company affair, they have witnessed the launching of a prime ministerial campaign whose central theme is strident anti-clericalism, and they have seen thousands of people protest against them in Tel Aviv.

The haredi parties took it further on the chin when Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak did something no politician with real prime ministerial aspiration has ever dared to do: submit a bill to draft yeshiva students.

Commentators began talking about a secular backlash against the religious parties, described by some as a classic taxpayers revolt against a community that enjoys the country's privileges, but does not equally share its responsibilities.

It is against this background that Gafni's response to Yehimovich's goading appears significant.

"I have a position on her [International] appearing, but I don't intend to express it," said Gafni. "There are things the haredi community does not have to get

involved in, and this is one of them. "There are those just waiting for every word to come out of our mouths so they can start an incitement campaign against us," he said. "I don't want to play into the hands of the very vocal, anti-religious, and anti-Jewish minority. We don't have to respond to everything."

TO THOSE who for months have decried a penchant by some religious politicians to involve themselves in issues that do not affect their constituencies, Gafni's words were a breath of fresh air.

Rabbi Benjamin Levene, a man who characterizes himself as haredi and lives in Jerusalem's Har Nof neighborhood, savored the breath.

"Sometimes, in order to live together, you have to overlook things," said Levene, associate director of Geshet, an organization fostering dialogue between the religious and secular.

Levene is the star of a Geshet-sponsored one-man show called *Four Faces of Israel*, which lampoons various Israeli stereotypes in an attempt to find common ground.

"Everyone has to lower the volume a few decibels, and sometimes this includes looking away from things, not making everything a national issue," he said.

While such conciliatory words are to be expected from Levene, they are not necessarily expected from Benny Rabinovitch, a senior reporter for *Yated Ne'eman* — a newspaper affiliated with Degel HaTorah, not known for a particularly forbearing tone.

"I don't think we have to change our profile," Rabinovitch said, when asked whether the haredi parties must change tactics and strategy or face a secular backlash. "But there are things we've



A haredi bypasser glances at a banner held up by secular protesters which reads, "One people, one [army] draft." (Israel Harari)

never done before, that people do now — such as involve themselves in issues that do not affect us."

Though he mentioned no names, Rabinovitch was clearly referring to Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Haim Miller, the man who sounded the alarm over

Batsheva's *Jubilee Bells* performance, and also pledged this week that the haredim would use their political clout to ensure that the Eurovision contest is not held in Jerusalem next year.

While Rabinovitch admitted that the current atmosphere in the country demands a change in the pronouncements made by haredi functionaries, he said that growing pressure to draft yeshiva students will not alter the position of haredi parties on that matter.

"That issue is basic and vital to the haredi community," Rabinovitch said. "Drafting yeshiva students will never pass; there will be no negotiations, nothing. People will not agree, they will rather go to jail."

Moreover, he claimed, the IDF doesn't need or want the haredim. Rabinovitch said Barak himself would jettison the plan if he were to become prime minister.

"This is something that is being used to get him into power, not something that will be implemented if he ever attains power," Rabinovitch claimed.

"All the time that Barak was convinced he would win an election, or bring about early elections, he did not deal with the religious," he dealt with Netanyahu. But the minute he saw his situation worsening, he understood that the only way he could improve his standing was on the backs of the religious.

"He can't talk anymore about

the [second stage] withdrawal [in the territories], people are sick of that. He can't talk about

Habad's Brodt says much more energy has to be exerted in pursuing high-profile dialogue between religious and secular leaders.

'One of the reasons for the current polarization is that you have two groups of leaders who only look at their home audience, and not at their overall responsibility to the whole public'

Netanyahu's cigars — that issue died in a day. But a campaign against the haredim can last nicely for a long period."

Since the haredim are associated with Netanyahu, Rabinovitch said, the strategy is simple: By "sticking it" to the haredim, which is popular, Barak is also "sticking it"

to Netanyahu.

The new situation does not necessarily demand a rethinking of haredi positions on various issues, but rather a serious, multi-million dollar public relations campaign, Rabinovitch said.

"Take a few million dollars, organize a public-relations campaign, and change the atmosphere," he urged. "We are sitting in a defensive posture instead of waging a public relations offensive that will ask what is happening in the country, what has happened all of a sudden that has forced yeshiva students onto the agenda."

A campaign is needed to explain what Torah study is, and why it is important, Rabinovitch said. "I explain this successfully to people all the time on a personal level, now it has to be done on a public level."

But Menahem Brodt, a Habad spokesman, who has been instrumental in a number of that organization's high-profile public-relations campaigns such as "Prepare for the coming of the Messiah" and "Netanyahu is good for the Jews," does not think PR is the remedy.

"A public-relations campaign will not work because you can't compete with the media which, if it turns against the campaign, can quickly reduce it to nothing," Brodt said.

"For the same million dollars I would do other things. I would establish a movement or an institute, along the lines of the Van Leer Institute, which would strictly deal with relations between religious and secular, which would push tolerance and enlist people from both sides who would cast out incitement from all direc-

tions."

A similar idea was put forth this week by Gabi Butbul, Shas's representative on the Israel Broadcasting Authority's board of directors. "Shas, along with another party, should establish an ideological body for dialogue," he said. "One of the conditions will be that the minute a Haim Miller appears, the body will come out against him and clip his wings. The extremists engender other extremists. They need to be quieted down, turned into a curiosity."

BRODT ALSO said much more energy has to be exerted in pursuing high-profile dialogue between leaders of each community. Although not exactly an original proposal, he said it was fundamentally important.

"One of the reasons for the current polarization is that you have two groups of leaders who only look at their home audience and not at their overall responsibility to the public," Brodt said.

"On the one hand are the anti-religious movements, which do not care that they are creating a huge schism in the country, but receive applause from their community. On the other hand are haredi functionaries who are focused on their home audience, and not on what they are doing to the whole public — and who also receive the applause of their supporters."

"When each leaves its home field and meets the other side, it will understand that there are other things that matter beyond the applause of its own supporters."

United Torah Judaism MK Avraham Ravitz said that on a tactical level, the religious parties have made some mistakes over the last few months.

Without wanting to elaborate, Ravitz said, "It is possible that we struggled for things that we didn't have to, that we put strength and energy in matters that we should not have addressed."

The situation in the country has changed of late, Ravitz said, "and we have to find the path suited to the changing action."

One such path of action that Ravitz has been involved in for a year is establishing a suitable framework within the IDF whereby haredi youth who do not want yeshiva studies can enter the army.

Ravitz has held talks on this matter with, among others, IDF representatives, Shas MK Shlomo Benizri, Third Way MK Alex Lubotzky and Labor MK Haim Ramon.

Although Ravitz denies that this initiative was the result of any outside pressure, it has been widely seen as an initiative designed to head off legislation that would enlist all but a few hundred haredim each year.

Just as the religious-secular chasm was not created overnight, said Zevulun Orlev, secretary-general of the National Religious Party, so any changes in the strategy, tactics and even policies of the religious parties should not be expected immediately.

"There are gradual changes," Orlev said. "I believe that these processes are long term. The chasm is not something that developed all of a sudden, and it reflects much tension from before. Relieving the tension no doubt will also be done incrementally — there is no magic wand."

The Haim Millers, Orlev said, exist on both sides.

"Just as there are Haim Millers in the religious camp, there are Haim Millers in the secular camp as well — extremists on both sides who make a living out of this argument. They will do whatever they can not to put out the fire, but to rekindle it again and again."

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Romanian building workers in Jerusalem: The deaths last week of nine foreign workers, including seven Romanians, highlighted the increasing number of fatalities in construction-related work accidents. (Brian Hendler)

Where life is cheap

Ironically, the Ashkelon power plant where nine foreign construction workers fell to their deaths last Friday was probably one of the safest building sites in Israel.

"The Israel Electric Corp. and Solel Boneh [the main subcontractor on the Ashkelon project] are leaders in the Israeli building trade when it comes to safety," said Peter Magnus, who is chief inspector of workplace health and safety for the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

So if such a horrendous accident could happen at one of the country's safest building sites — the workers fell down a 250-meter high smokestack when a platform collapsed — what must safety conditions be like at a more typical site? "It's an awful mess," said Prof. Elihu D. Richter, head of the Unit for Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Hebrew University Medical School's School of Medicine. "You look around these building sites and see weak scaffolding, weak ladders, the workers aren't wearing hard hats or protective goggles, the construction pits are left open, and the interior spaces aren't lit."

Two days after the accident in Ashkelon, a foreign construction worker in Rishon LeZion was killed when a wall fell on him. "We hear about a death on construction sites almost every week. And the number of serious injuries is of course much higher. Scaffolding collapses, ladders collapse. People get crippled for life," said Hanna Zohar, coordinator of Kav La'Oved (Workers' Hotline), which defends foreign workers' labor rights.

Some 3,500 construction workers were permanently disabled on the job last year, according to Magnus. Deaths and injuries have gone up in recent years with the increase in construction, he explained.

Contractors commonly break the law by forcing foreign laborers to work 12, 14, 16 or even more hours a day, making them prone to accidents, Zohar pointed out. Magnus, Richter and Zohar each said they strongly suspect that many of these workers have no experience in construction when they are brought to Israel.

Drunkness, however, also appears to be one of the problems. Magnus recalls reading autopsy reports on two Romanian construction workers killed on the job. Both had high levels of alcohol in their blood.

While Romanians, Thais and

Small building contractors who see no monetary incentive for safety in the workplace is one reason why the toll of dead and disabled foreign laborers is rising, writes Larry Derfner

other foreigners do most of the hardest, most dangerous jobs on building sites, until this year Palestinians and Israelis constituted the majority of those killed.

Twenty-two building laborers, including 13 foreigners, have been killed so far this year. Fifty workers, including 14 foreigners, were killed in 1997. Forty-nine workers, including 19 foreigners, were killed in 1996. Forty workers, including seven foreigners, were killed in 1995.

Added to compare Israeli building safety standards to those in other countries, Richter placed Israel "at the bottom of the First World or the top of the Third World." Magnus gave a similar rating. "We have quite a gap to bridge. We're well behind Western Europe, and I imagine we're about the same distance behind North America."

"I was just in Germany and the safety standards there are much higher than ours," he continued. "For instance, their scaffolding is much sturdier, and they cover their buildings [under construction] with sheeting so pedestrians on the sidewalks don't get hit by falling debris," he said.

Israeli building sites became notoriously hazardous after the Six Day War, when contractors began replacing well-paid, unionized Israeli workers with cheap, non-unionized laborers — first Palestinians, then foreigners as well, said Richter.

There is a correlation between cheap labor and hazardous working conditions, he says. "When workers are, to put it bluntly, disposable, then there's no economic incentive to invest in safety and ensure the employees' productivity over a sustained period of time. Contract laborers have no rights. If one of them gets injured, the contractor can just fire him. It's no big deal for an employer to lose a guy."

Foreign workers who are injured on the job and press for compensation are liable to be illegally "deported" by the Israeli manpower companies that brought them into the country, Zohar said. They

are simply driven to the airport and put on a plane back home, say contractors at Kav La'Oved.

The Histadrut takes no interest in the safety of non-union laborers, Richter said, and, according to Magnus, hasn't shown particular concern in recent years even with the safety of unionized Israeli building tradesmen. The Histadrut's spokesman could not be reached for comment.

When contractors are not properly supervised, they hire sub-contractors, Magnus says, "this one thinks that safety is that one's responsibility, and that one thinks it's somebody else's, so protection of the employees often falls through the cracks." Big contractors tend to be better at ensuring safety than the smaller ones. But since the Russian aliyah brought on a building boom in the 1990s, a lot of small, irresponsible contractors have gotten into the business, Magnus added.

All building contractors are required to be licensed by the Housing Ministry, but an undernumbered number of them are not.

The Israel Association of

Contractors has over 2,500 members, and Magnus said these employers are likely to have higher safety standards than non-members. One association official estimated the number of non-affiliated Israeli contractors at 3,000.

Shlomo Dahan, head of safety for the Contractors Association, said that while dangers on construction sites were definitely a problem, there has been "considerable improvement" in recent years. A year-and-a-half ago, the association began sending out a mobile safety unit to construction sites, explaining proper precautions to workers in a number of languages, he said.

This unit stopped operating when the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs began circulating one of its own. Dahan said. The association holds occasional conferences and courses on safety for its contractors, he added.

"Putting safety awareness into people's minds is a long process, and we just began dealing with it a year-and-a-half ago," Dahan said.

The long wait, he explained, was because while the contractors are required to comply with the safety laws, "the responsibility for ensuring that they comply does not belong to us, but rather to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs."

Still, "we wanted to contribute to the effort," he added.

"Look, it's not easy," Dahan continued. "I was at a site in Beit Shemesh the other day and I saw that the workers weren't wearing hard hats or goggles, so I told the foreman, and he said he has a roomful of hard hats and goggles,



Thais (pictured), Romanians and other foreign workers do most of the dangerous building jobs: 13 foreigners have been killed so far this year. (Sarit Uzely)

but the workers won't wear them."

Only some contractors tell laborers that if they don't wear the protective equipment, they will not be allowed to work, he said.

"What are they going to do, fight the whole workforce? A lot of these workers are Arabs. Romanians and Thais who don't have much knowledge or concern about safety, and it's hard to force it on them."

Zohar says a key element in the problem is the lack of sufficient enforcement. "There aren't enough spot checks at the construction sites," he said. "The contractors aren't afraid of the inspectors because the penalties are token," added Richter.

If the Housing and Construction Ministry hears of serious safety complaints against contractors from labor inspectors, it will investigate and at times revoke the contractors' licenses, said ministry spokesman Moshe Friedman.

"In the last month we've revoked four licenses and we're investigating eight other contractors," Friedman said. "This is a pretty high figure, so it seems the labor inspectors might have just woken up."

Surprisingly, Magnus did not complain of being understaffed. He said he currently has 16 inspectors making unannounced inspections on construction sites around the country. "When we find safety violations, usually we try to get the contractor to correct the situation," he said. "If he doesn't, we can fine him or close down the job until the problem is corrected."

A fine for unsafe scaffolding or defects in other equipment can run to NIS 3,000. If the violation is especially grave, the inspector may ask a labor court judge to impose a higher fine. "But the labor courts aren't too strict about this, and are sometimes too lenient in levying fines," Magnus said.

Last year safety inspectors closed down some 1,400 construction projects until hazards were corrected. Some 2,600 contractors were ordered to correct safety hazards under threat of having their jobs shut down, Magnus said.

But the total amount of fines handed out to all the contractors violating safety laws in Israel last year came to NIS 231,000.

That isn't really money when compared to the billions of dollars contractors made during the year.

The reason why the platform broke at the Ashkelon power plant, and who was responsible for the failure, is under investigation. The deaths of the nine workers — seven Romanians, one Indian and one American — shocked Israelis.

But those who've taken a good look at construction sites in this country shouldn't have been too surprised.

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MOTHERS

Continued from Page 1

All the other hospitals receive NIS 1 to NIS 20 per distributed package, or have a global financial agreement with the companies.

"In principle, we strongly oppose the distribution of free gifts inside hospitals," said Mira Huebner, the Health Ministry's legal adviser. "It is our declared policy, and we have periodically instructed them not to allow it. This is a crude entry of commercialism into medical facilities, and it is not desirable."

"We will look into it. But we are not responsible for supervising companies that transfer personal data; that is the job of the database registrar in the Justice Ministry."

In addition, although the Health Ministry banned the free distribution of baby formula in state-owned medical facilities back in 1993, nearly all of its own hospitals have signed deals with companies that distribute such products, even though trying them out could discourage mothers from breast-feeding their babies.

"Gifts in hospitals are a very important problem that you hit upon," Haim Klugman, chairman of the Justice Ministry-affiliated National Council for the Protection of Privacy and a former ministry director-general, said.

"We discussed the matter only

last week. Companies that get data from willing mothers in obstetrics departments may legally use the information only for a specified purpose, usually for mailed advertisements, but not hand it over to other companies.

"Everyone should be very careful about giving his name, address, phone numbers, and identity card numbers for prizes, gifts, and lotteries, as the information could be passed on illegally to build a personal profile of individuals used for commercial purposes."

Klugman urged anyone who thinks his rights have been abused to complain to his council at 6 Rehov Hillel in Jerusalem or to the Justice Ministry's database registrar (rasmah ma'agarei meida).

M.G., a Jerusalemite who gave birth recently at Hadassah-University Hospital in Ein Kerem, received a gift package in the ward from the Tza'ad Rishon company in Azur. Asked her name, she gave it, but did not provide any other information.

The package contained mineral water, formula, pacifiers, bottles, soaps, ointments, and other products — worth NIS 200-NIS 300 — in addition to pamphlets from a variety of companies.

But even though she didn't fill in Tza'ad Rishon's form, she said she has received numerous calls from companies since the birth. When she asked how they

found her, she said, "they all mentioned Remedix," the company that contracted with Tza'ad Rishon to include formula in the package.

Remedix supplies free most or all of the formula consumed by babies born at Hadassah's two hospitals.

The Hadassah Medical Organization (HMO) commented that more than 700 women give birth at its hospitals each month, and all are entitled to the free gift.

"Most of the mothers are very pleased with the present, and those who missed out on it complain," said Dr. Shmuel Shapira, deputy director of the Ein Kerem hospital. Shapira said that "a week doesn't pass when two or three companies come to us to offer new mothers free gifts. We turn many down."

Nevertheless, Hadassah has signed formal agreements with several companies.

"For many Jerusalemite mothers, such a valuable gift is significant for them. The contract that Hadassah signs with suppliers specifically states that receipt of the gift may not be dependent on filling out a form, and that information provided cannot be abused by transferring it to other companies that didn't contribute to the gift package. But we will investigate any complaints," Shapira added.

As for the formula, Shapira said that HMO "has always encouraged breast-feeding with birth-preparation courses, booklets, and rooming in, but it is not bound by Health Ministry orders not to distribute such products because we aren't government hospitals."

He also said there is "no connection" between the formula Remedix supplies to the hospital and Remedix's free gift, even though Hadassah has turned down offers from Materna and other formula companies.

However, HMO said that in view of the "problematic issues" raised by the Post, management would meet specially next week to discuss the matter of gifts to mothers and commercial agreements.

Carmel Hospital has signed agreements (via its owner Kupat Holim Clalit) with both Tza'ad Rishon and a Petah Tikva company called Tenne-Kat. Tenne-Kat also has an agreement with Sheba Hospital.

Carmel spokeswoman Haya Goldberger disclosed yesterday that it had received complaints from patients about Tza'ad Rishon.

"Mothers who received the gift got calls from insurance companies, and they complained about this. We will look into this," she said.

The full-page forms state that the companies that contributed to

PAKISTAN

Continued from Page 1

The newspaper said US officials believe the test would be conducted in the Chagai Hills, a remote site in the Baluchistan desert near Pakistan's western border with Iran. One of the warheads would be lowered down a deep shaft and exploded.

Foreign intelligence agents in Pakistan have reported that the test could be conducted immediately, for maximum political effect, or later next week for a greater yield of technological data, officials told the Times.

"No one expects them not to have a test," the Times said, citing a Clinton administration official. There was no comment from the Pakistani government on either report and it was not known how long the meeting would last.

Successive Pakistani governments have said they have the ability to carry out a nuclear test but have refrained from doing so as a conscious effort to keep a lid on regional tension with India, with whom it has fought three wars.

US President Bill Clinton on Wednesday ordered Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and other top officials to Pakistan to persuade Sharif not to conduct a

US officials in Europe said that

Talbott was likely to meet Sharif today for what are expected to be tough talks after strident Pakistani criticism of US policy on India.

Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan on Wednesday slammed the US government's sanctions against India as inadequate and said that Washington had aided and abetted New Delhi over the years by failing to brake its nuclear program.

Sharif and Clinton spoke by telephone on Wednesday but the prime minister afterwards voiced disappointment at US policy toward India and said Pakistan's reaction would be sovereign.

In his telephone call, Clinton asked Sharif to resist the temptation to respond to an irresponsible act, said Karl Inderfurth, assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs.

"Sharif was not able to give that reassurance. He told the president that he was under tremendous pressure to respond," the Times quoted Inderfurth as saying.

The cabinet was thought to be discussing the inevitable economic sanctions the blast would trigger and appeals from Clinton and the European Union for restraint.

Sharif, Khan and other leaders have repeatedly said that Pakistan's response to India's first tests since 1974 will be in Islamabad and will not be "dictated" by pressure from its allies and aid donors.

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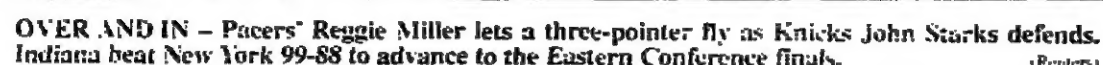
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Hingis now has a quarter-final with Anna Kournikova, who was highly impressive in the way she brought down the fifth-seeded former French Open champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario 6-4, 6-1.



Wednesday
Indiana 99, New York 88
(Indiana wins series 4-1)
Chicago 93, Charlotte 84
(Chicago wins series 4-1)
CONFERENCE FINALS
(Best-of-7)
Tomorrow
L.A. Lakers at Utah, 3 p.m. (All times
EST).
Sunday
Indiana at Chicago, 3:30 p.m.

Following a call for action in *The Jerusalem Post* on Tuesday, academic and Israel Radio soccer analyst Yossi Olmert said yesterday that he has already received "over a hundred" faxes from irate cable viewers who are incensed at the removal of an "Anglo" sports channel from their TV screens.

Olmert told *The Post* that he has spoken to Zvi Hauser, director of the Council for Cable TV and Satellite Broadcasting at the Communications Ministry, and next week plans to formulate a plan with local and foreign public figures.

In the Second Division all that remains to be decided is whether Maccabi Jaffa or Zafirim Holon will be champions. Both are certain to be promoted to the National League next season and Jaffa lead

At the bottom, also hapless Maccabi Yavne and Hapoel Ramat Gan have already been relegated. Their place in next season's Second Division will be taken by Maccabi Ahi Nazareth and Betar Beersheba.

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